

INSIDE

MILITARY SURPLUS

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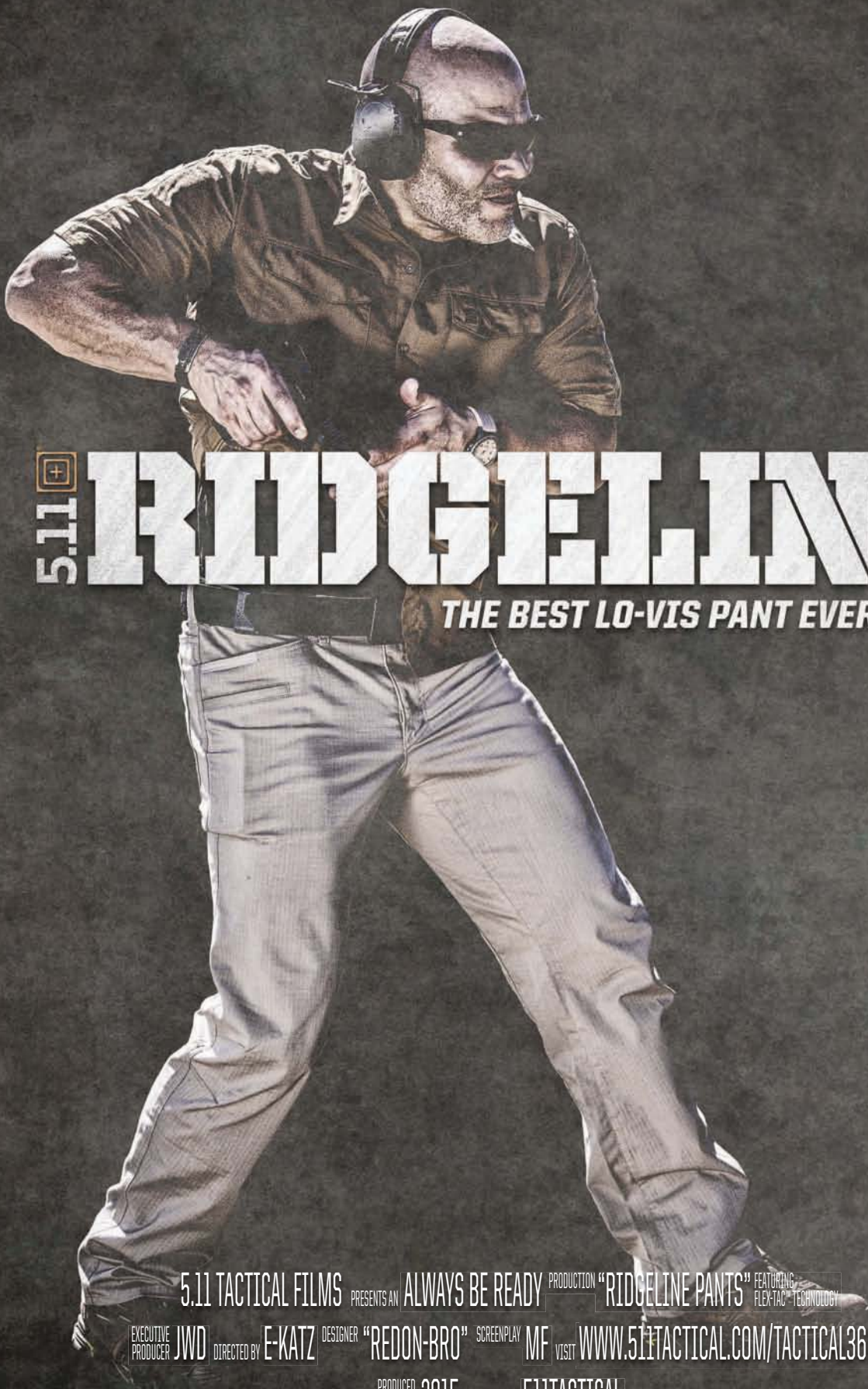
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Inland's M1 Carbine and 1911 Pistol

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

EDITORIAL

Once Surplus, Now Collectible

When I was in my early teens, I used to frequent a local army-navy store.

The amount of surplus U.S. field gear and musty old uniforms crammed into that place was staggering. It was a great spot to find cheap gear for camping.

When I started hunting, I often used a surplus web belt with canteen, cup and various pouches, along with an old shoulder sack for any “possibles” while out in the woods for the day.

That store is long gone and much of the cheap gear it sold — if you can find it — has now multiplied several times over in value and is in the caring hands of collectors.

There are still a few such stores around and, of course, things can be purchased on the Internet. But much of the gear seems to be of foreign military origin or “military-style” reproductions that don’t offer the same quality.

Much surplus gear is prized and hoarded by those prepping for the many threatening “what-ifs” that seem to swirl around us. Campers and hunters today often prefer new, commercially made civilian clothing and equipment designed not only to be lightweight and functional but fashionable as well.

Cross paths with a trendy hiker today while you’re wearing surplus clothing and gear and that hiker will mostly likely yield the right-of-way as he eyes you suspiciously.

What was lost more than anything from those military surplus days was the clever improvising that occurred while repurposing old gear for new recreational adventures. Gone, too, were the ties to history, the times when you hiked a trail and wondered about how many miles soldiers of the last generation marched carrying that same gear.

The history is not lost on collectors, however. Maybe your “collecting” amounts to owning a single, inexpensive and well-worn shooter. Or maybe you’ve compiled a near-complete set of uniform patches of your favorite military unit. Maybe you’re one of the lucky ones with an investment in vintage military arms that sell at auction for more than I paid for my house. Wherever you fit in to this picture, it’s great that you can still touch and appreciate small reminders of our constant and necessary struggle to keep our freedoms.

Steven Paul Barlow, editor

INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

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Every Soldier has a story to tell.

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TURNBULL MANUFACTURING PHOTO

EXPERTS IN FIREARMS RESTORATION CAN SPRUCE UP YOUR OLD MILITARY ARMS

LIKE NEW

You might have an interest in old military firearms but are unable to afford all-original collectibles at today's prices. Or maybe you want an attractive showpiece that you're not afraid to take out to the range for an afternoon of shooting.

The answer for you might be one of the experts in firearms restoration. These companies can take your old, beat-up shooter that might not have a lot of collector value and turn it into a beautiful and fully functional firearm you'll be proud to show off at the range.

JAMES RIVER ARMORY

When James River Armory was founded in 2002, the company dealt primarily in reproductions of Civil War arms for collectors and those involved in reenactments.

The company then switched its focus to military arms of World War II and beyond. They began rebuilding and refurbishing M1 Garands and M1 Carbines. As parts became scarce, they turned to manufacturing, starting with a reproduction of the Rockola M1 Carbine and the

M14F rifle. For AK fans, the company also offered a Hungarian AK47.

The newest of the company's offerings is their M21 DMR, essentially an M14 with optics rail.

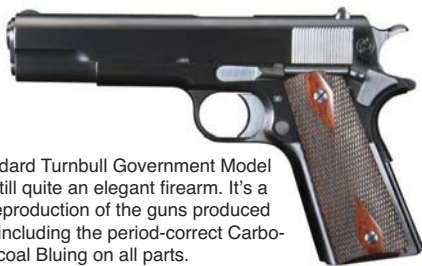
Despite the company's foray into manufacturing, head man Mark Hartman will still take in your old Garand or M1 Carbine and restore it to arsenal-reissued condition.

For your Garand, James River Armory will finish the metal with original zinc phosphate parkerizing with the option of mounting an original or reproduction lockbar sight and either an original G.I. or new Criterion barrel. The guns are then fitted with a new American walnut stock, cartouched for the receiver's serial number.

M1 Carbines can be restored as originally issued or with the adjustable sights and bayonet lug of the more widely available Type III model. The gun will be fitted with all original U.S.G.I. parts, unless a new Criterion barrel is requested. The metal is parkerized and the firearm is fitted with a new American walnut stock.

“THESE COMPANIES CAN TAKE YOUR OLD, BEAT-UP SHOOTER AND TURN IT INTO A BEAUTIFUL AND FULLY FUNCTIONAL FIREARM ...”

TURNBULL MANUFACTURING PHOTOS



The standard Turnbull Government Model 1911 is still quite an elegant firearm. It's a faithful reproduction of the guns produced in 1918, including the period-correct Carbo-nia Charcoal Bluing on all parts.



The Turnbull BBQ Government Model 1911 was inspired by the Western tradition of “dressing up” to go to a cookout. The BBQ model is available in four different types of engraving against a Nitre Blue finish.

TURNBULL RESTORATION AND MANUFACTURING CO.

Owner Doug Turnbull rose to prominence in the gun world with his exquisite color case hardening refinishes of Old West firearms, particularly Winchester lever action rifles and Colt revolvers.

The company now produces its own firearms, including Winchester 1886 lever actions in 45-70 or 45-90 and rifles based on the Ruger No. 1 in the company's hard-hitting proprietary .475 Turnbull chambering. There is even the Turnbull TAR 15, an AR-15 with color case hardened receiver and wood-grain colored plastic stock.

Perhaps of most interest to military arms enthusiasts is the company's line of 1911 pistols. These are true 1911's as were produced circa 1918, not the modified 1911A1 versions that came along later.

These 1911's are available in plain or engraved versions with blued or color case hardened frames. Commander-sized models are also available.

The firm's specialty continues to be restoring old firearms. You can send your old gun to the company for a free estimate that you'll receive within two weeks. You then have a month to ponder the quote. If you decide not to have the work done, you pay only for return shipping.

Shooting your old military firearm might just be a little more fun after it's been restored by one of these companies and is the envy of those at your local range. **IMS**

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

JAMES RIVER ARMORY PHOTOS



James River Armory is now making a reproduction of the Rockola M1 Carbine from World War II.



The M1 Garand is one of the restored World War II firearms that has been offered by James River Armory.

CONTACT

James River Armory – www.jamesriverarmory.com
Turnbull Restoration and Manufacturing – www.turnbullmfg.com



010

INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

A LOOK AT MILITARY COLLECTIBLES AND HOW TO GET STARTED IN THIS HOBBY

HOLDING HISTORY



There's a special mystique associated with anything that has a military heritage. Just ask a collector. It's pride, it's memories, it's patriotism.

Some collect photos, uniforms, insignia, helmets or other field gear. Others are more interested in the firearms soldiers carried.

Firearms might include a beat up and inexpensive Mosin Nagant or Swiss K-31 that are fun to shoot with cheap surplus ammo. Others might opt for more rare pieces, such as the British Bren Mark II machine gun pictured above that sold at a James D. Julia, Inc. auction this year for \$31,050.

No matter what the collectible, there's something special about holding onto and preserving little pieces of history. Just ask a collector. **IMS**



012

INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

COLLECTING MILITARY RELICS CAN BECOME A LIFELONG PASSION WITH A DESERVING PAY-OFF

PRESERVING THE PAST

■ By Steven Paul Barlow

Much of our history, especially military history, would be lost if it wasn't for the efforts of collectors who try to piece together the small stories and fine details of the big events that have shaped our lives.

Those preserving the past are often rewarded when it's time to turn over to the next generation the once-common objects that have become rare treasures over time.

Here we answer the top six questions about the phenomenon of collecting militaria.

1. WHO'S COLLECTING AND WHY?

Some collectors were in military service. Others had close relatives in the military. But there are other reasons a person becomes a collector. Justin Baum of Central New York is 27 years old and has been collecting for about 12 years — since he was a sophomore in high school.

"I've always been a history buff," Baum said. "I was a big fan of war movies, and I planned on going into the military after college. One day I purchased a World War II uniform on a whim. I got it in the mail and started researching the name on it."



JUSTIN BAUM PHOTO

(left) This French 1786 bronze one-pounder cannon sold at a James D. Julia, Inc. auction for \$9,775.

(right) World War II and later sleeve insignia patches used to indicate a service member's unit.

(below) 1950s U.S. Navy Admiral's visor cap.



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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

JUSTIN BAUM PHOTO





A display of World War II U.S. Military ephemera, including patches, dog tags, pins, guidebook, medals and ribbons.

Baum was hooked on collecting militaria. He started collecting uniforms and, at one point, had more than 300 of them from all branches of the U.S. military.

“As the years went by I started to release some, selling and trading to get more items that I was interested in,” he said. “I felt what better way to really learn about history than to actually hold pieces that were used by the people who were there. Preserving history is the driving force behind collecting.”

Among those who collect firearms, many start out as firearms enthusiasts, according to Brian Schmidt of the Rock Island Auction Company in Rock Island, Illinois. He said many times a person with an interest in shooting a particular firearm researches its history and finds there were variations and that some are rare and collectible. That's how some catch the collecting bug.

"We're a nation of collectors," Schmidt said. "Actually it's quite amazing to see people who have pur-

chased high quality, collectible firearms and they say they intend to take them out and shoot them.”

These gun enthusiasts quickly learn, however, that collecting can be a good, longer-term investment.

“The way that fine firearms have historically appreciated in value, a firearms enthusiast who properly cares for his firearms has been a successful investor by definition,” said John Keene, who works in the firearms division of the James D. Julia, Inc. auction house in Fairfield, Maine.

He noted a typical case in which a firearms enthusiast bought a firearm at one of the James D. Julia auctions five years ago for \$3,500 because he wanted to enjoy shooting it.

“He sold it here at auction last fall so he could ‘upgrade’ to something he wanted more,” Keene said. That firearm sold for \$10,500.

"Fine quality firearms have a proven history as solid investments, particularly during recent times of inflation," Keene said. "More money is being printed every



Thompson submachine guns continue to be popular among collectors.

“PRESERVING HISTORY IS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND COLLECTING.”

year. Fine old and historic firearms in high condition are at a fixed and dwindling supply.”

2. WHAT ARE THEY COLLECTING?

Though many collectors focus on firearms, many other are interested in field gear, helmets, insignia, photographs and documents.

“My specialty now is that I collect uniforms, hats and different types of personal items from generals and admirals from World War II until the 1970s,” Baum said. “I really have an interest in the guys who commanded the large forces.”

Many times those who collect firearms aren’t just collecting the firearms.

“It’s part of the collector bug,” Schmidt said. “If you’re buying a German Luger or a U.S. G.I. .45 or something like that, it’s a natural extension to try to buy the right holster or right web belt or leather belt — whatever the issue equipment was that went along with it to complete that collection. That even extends into getting the right ammo.”

3. WHAT’S CURRENTLY POPULAR?

“Anything of quality and with documented historical ties is desirable,” Keene said. “Combine those with rarity and high original condition, and you have a recipe for a home run. What I am seeing as ‘hot’ right now are World War II items, Vietnam era, and this current ‘state of the art’ modern weapon designs.”

“U.S. stuff always does well,” Schmidt added. “Then you get to the European stuff, where Lugers, Broomhandles, 1896 Mausers, 1930 Mausers, World War II pistols, World War I rifles and pistols — they’ll always do well as long as they’re in original condition. But I think the U.S. military is bringing out the best across the board.”

“In our last two auctions our military class 3 guns were smoking hot,” Keene said. “A deactivated Chinese RPD sold for \$90K, a British .303 Lewis gun for \$39K, and an MP-18 for \$32K. We had original Colt Thompson sub-machine guns that sold for over \$32K and \$36K respectively.”

AN ELEPHANT GUN FOR HIS LORDSHIP

Buyers at the James D. Julia auctions come not just from America, but from the world and can include royalty.

“I recall one occasion many years ago when a 19th Century elephant gun came across the auction block,” Keene said. “It was a fine specimen with goose-necked hammer. Bidding was fairly lively. Then, an impeccably dressed gentleman who had not previously bid simply put his bid card up and held it there.

“He nodded ‘yes’ to Mr. Julia each time Mr. Julia looked at him for confirmation that he wanted to raise his bid as other bidders vied for the gun,” he said. “The gun went to this gentleman for a significant amount of money.

“After the hammer fell and the item was acknowledged as sold to his bidder number, this gentleman walked over to the area where he could take immediate custody of his ‘antique’ gun,” Keene said. “As he was leaving the auction hall, someone called out to him: ‘Did you come here just to get that ONE gun?’

“The gentleman turned and calmly said in a very British accent, ‘Why yes, I was sent here by Milord with instructions to acquire this gun and bring it back with me to England where it belongs.’

“Without another word, he turned and walked out the door,” Keene said.



Famous toggle top of the German Luger. It can take many years to learn all the markings on different variants of this pistol.



World War II vintage German MP 44 assault rifle, which is considered the forefather of many modern military select-fire carbines.

4. WHERE CAN YOU BUY IT?

According to Baum, auctions, estate sales, military shows, gun shows and online sites such as eBay are all good places to find collectibles. Knocking on the door of a veteran's widow, however, is taboo.

"Sometimes these are finds that relatives of veterans or collectors make when cleaning out attics or closets," Keene said. "In other cases these are guns which come from discerning collectors who have been collecting for many years and have decided either it is time to thin their collections, or perhaps desire to move from one collecting genre into another."

Schmidt said finding specific items is easier today with all of the auctions across the country.

"Even so, there are people who have been collecting for years who still have holes in their collections because they can't get that key piece," he said.

5. ARE YOU PAYING A FAIR PRICE?

Prices for original items depend on their condition and how desirable they are as collectibles.

"You have to stay in tune with the market," Baum said.

He suggested monitoring eBay and other sales venues, such as online forums, websites of military collectibles dealers and shows across the country that specialize in military collectibles. He said it's especially important to keep track of what things are actually selling for versus what they're asking.

One way to do that is through the auction houses.



World War II U.S. Army Air Force pilot's silk survival map of Japan and surrounding areas.



When you think of Mauser military rifles, you normally think of the K98 bolt action. This, however, is the Mauser G41, a semi-auto rifle.



Paratrooper model of the U.S. .30-caliber M1 Carbine. Several manufacturers are making reproductions of these popular guns.

"Get auction house catalogs with good detailed descriptions, which include prices realized," Keene said. "Not only Julia's, but other auction houses have good catalogs with detailed descriptions of condition. This will give you a feel for what you can expect to pay for specimens of their kind."

Schmidt said that experts at the various auctions use historical pricing data but also look at market trends.

"We'll see trends where things are really hot for awhile, then they'll cool off a bit," he said. "A lot of time it's reference material that drives it. Someone puts a book out and people start to realize, 'Hey they only made 200 of these,' and that fuels collector interest. The more reference material that's out there naming all the makes and models and different markings, the more collectors key in on those things. Books elevate values of guns."

6. IS DOCUMENTATION IMPORTANT?

Documentation is desirable both to authentic a piece and to preserve the story behind it.

"At some point, every military item was part of a

larger grouping, say in a foot locker for instance," Baum said. "When a veteran comes home, it's got all his uniforms, his paperwork, his medals, his gear, his souvenirs. Then over the years a lot of that stuff gets split up. When all that stays together, it adds a premium to the historical significance of the group as well as to the price."

With higher-priced items that can run thousands of dollars, all that documentation that can prove the provenance is extremely important."

"There is nothing like the stories behind the interesting rare guns to increase the interest and value in them," Keene said. "Julia's offered and sold the 'officially issued to Gen Patton' Colt 1911A1 .45 ACP many years ago. I was there in the audience. What would otherwise have been a \$300 to \$500 gun at the time hammered at \$20,000." **IMS**

The author is the editor of Inside Military Surplus and a retired station commander with the New York State Police.



HERE ARE YOUR MARCHING ORDERS FOR GETTING STARTED IN MILITARY COLLECTIBLES

GATHER THE GEAR

By Steven Paul Barlow

It's intriguing to think of the stories that are hidden behind old artifacts, especially the ones with a military connection.

But to begin collecting those artifacts and researching the stories behind them can be a daunting task. How do you get started? What should you collect? How do you acquire the necessary expertise? How do you really know if the hard-earned money you're investing is going toward a true original and not a pieced-together piece of junk?

The short answer is that you collect what interests you, there are no unbreakable rules about that, and the knowledge is something you continue to acquire through a lifetime of research and discovery.

If you're looking for more specific advice, here are six tips from some experts in the field.

1. FOCUS YOUR INTERESTS

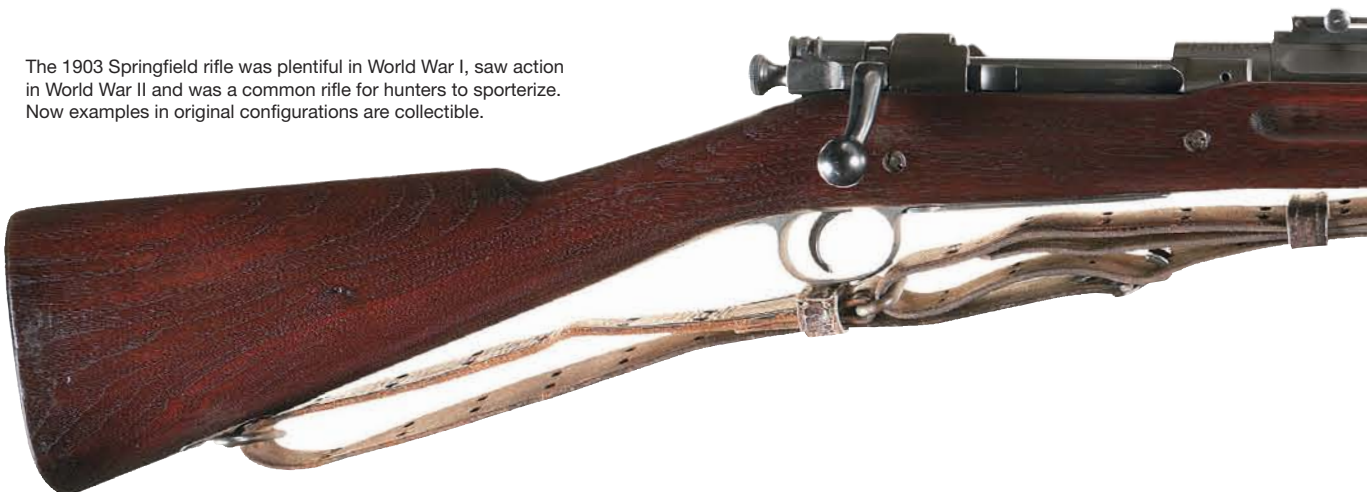
"People who start out today need to focus and focus narrowly, fill all those niches and then expand," said Brian Schmidt of the Rock Island Auction Co. in Illinois that specializes in firearms.

Justin Baum, who collects uniforms among other items, agreed.

"When I first started, despite getting a lot of advice from older collectors to focus on quality over quantity and to specialize in one area, I did what a lot of new collectors do," he said. "If it was green I wanted it, if it was military I had to have it."

"There comes a point at which you look around the room and say, 'Well I have a lot of stuff, but some of it doesn't fit my particular niche of collecting,'" Baum continued. "So, at that point you start to heed the guidance to narrow down the focus and

The 1903 Springfield rifle was plentiful in World War I, saw action in World War II and was a common rifle for hunters to sporterize. Now examples in original configurations are collectible.





Two U.S. military helmets: a World War II M-1 helmet (L) and a World War I "Doughboy" helmet from the 27th Infantry Division.

pick an area that really interests you. Staying close to your core interests was really the best advice that I eventually started to follow."

What you collect is totally up to you.

"Some would be happy with small representative collection from each branch of the military," Baum said. "Then there are those who say they want only Navy or only Army or only Marines and they'll focus on that. Some will collect only World War I items. Some will be even more specific and want to collect only one certain unit or only one type of item such as bayonets, for example."

"Even then you can spend a lifetime collecting weapons in one specific area," Schmidt said.

He pointed out that if the one thing you decide

to collect is German Lugers, for instance, there are probably 250 to 300 known variations out there.

2. NEVER STOP RESEARCHING

"As a new collector, you have to start out and buy reference books," Schmidt said. "That's a key thing. If you want to be an expert in Lugers and collect Lugers, you need to find every Luger reference book you can find and study them like you would in school and learn all the makes and models and proof marks and have a good background of knowledge."

He said the same applies whether you're collecting swords, uniforms, helmets or any of the accoutrements. There are books out there that tell you



"...THERE ARE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FORUMS WHERE THOUSANDS OF COLLECTORS COME TOGETHER..."

Order of Induction into Military Service
of the United States.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
John F. Murray
Serial Number 816
Order Number 1051

Meeting: Having submitted yourself to a local board com-
missioned for the purpose of determining the place
in which you can best serve the United States in the
emergency, you are hereby notified that you have now been
accepted for immediate military service.

You will, therefore, report to the local board named below
on the 26th day of February, 1918, at 2 P. M.,
(Place of reporting.)
Cortland, N. Y.

From and after the day and hour just named you will be a
member in the military service of the United States.

Charles H. Board
Local Board for Cortland Co.
Cortland County



There are no rules about what you
can collect. Here is a grouping of
documents and a medal to a World
War I U.S. Army soldier killed in
action during the Meuse-Argonne
Offensive in September 1918.

On Active Service
WITH THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Every thing about
me is unusual. The
weather is getting
much milder. I
have received
more of you
but have
no answer.



“... YOU NEED TO FIND EVERY ... REFERENCE
BOOK YOU CAN FIND AND STUDY THEM LIKE
YOU WOULD IN SCHOOL ...”

which are the real ones and which markings should be on them.

“‘Small Arms of the World’ is a book I immediately went out and replaced when my copy went missing during a trip last year,” said John Keene, firearms division of the James D. Julia auction house in Maine. “It covers military small arms sorted by country of origin and is a good general source of information about many modern military firearms. ‘The Blue Book of Gun Values’ is also a great source of information about firearms, but I refer to the auction house ‘prices realized’ when I want a most accurate up-to-date evaluation.”

He suggested that you should choose books which specialize in and give you detailed information on the particular genre rather than a “coffee table” book of glossy photographs and one-line statements.

“When collecting, the devil is in the details, and you will want the details,” he said.

3. JOIN ORGANIZATIONS, MEET PEOPLE, MAKE CONNECTIONS

Schmidt recommends that collectors should attend gun shows, make friends with other collectors and join organizations.

“Gun shows still have a lot of stuff,” he said. “It’s all an enhancement of your knowledge.”

There are organizations across the country, too, for just about any collectible you can name.

4. SURF THE NET

Though Baum uses reference books, he believes the Internet is the best resource.

“You can learn about the availability of items,” he said. “And there are a number of different forums where thousands of collectors come together, post different items, and have discussions about what things ensure items are original and where things were acquired.”

One such forum is www.usmilitariaforum.com.

“The forum has about 10,000 members registered,” said Baum, who is one of the moderators of the forum. “There are hundreds of posts a day. People are showing what they purchased; and there’s buying, selling and trading going on and research, too. It’s a really interesting place. There’s no fee and anyone can join.”

Schmidt said the auction houses have websites that are excellent resources. They can provide descriptions

of items, their condition, where they came from and how much they brought in the sale.

5. GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

“You also learn a lot by just looking at the finishes and proof marks,” Schmidt said. “I hate to say it, but there are people who have been refinishing guns and faking guns just to make money, and you’ve got to be able to tell not only the original ones with the original proofs, but you’ve got to be able to identify the ones that have been faked or put together and be able to tell when they’ve been refinished to try to enhance the value.”

Keene agreed.

“Seeing examples of items that are correct originals has been a key component of my development as a collector,” he said.

It’s no different with other collectibles.

“With items such as uniforms, it’s going to come down to looking at insignia placement, how long the insignia has been on a uniform, or different types of patina that’s on metal when it concerns insignia,” Baum said. “There are certain markings that should or shouldn’t be on certain items, and obviously just wear and tear would be a good indicator of age if you’re looking at something original.”

6. LOOK FOR QUALITY

Keene stressed that it’s better to focus your resources and collecting on the higher quality examples in better condition when you can find them and to upgrade to better specimens when they present themselves.

“Like in the classic game of Monopoly, it is better to have Park Place and Boardwalk than to have States Ave., Virginia Ave. and St. Charles Place,” he said. “There will always be someone who wants the top quality, original, high condition, historic mainstream military firearm, for example.”

He said a specimen in poor condition might be all right as a filler until a better specimen comes along, but he recommends spending a little extra to get a higher quality, better example if you can.

“You will be glad you did after a few years pass,” he said. “What may seem like a high price today will often turn out to be a bargain after a few years. Remember this if you don’t remember anything else: Get what you like and feel good about.” **IMS**



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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

5 MUSEUMS THAT CAN INSPIRE YOUR PASSION FOR MILITARY COLLECTIBLES

IGNITE YOUR FIRE

■ By KIM LEE / Photos courtesy of the museums

Collecting military-related items blends a special mix of brainwork and passion.

Hours of study can be spent poring over past accounts and photos of collectibles, learning about their design, function and battlefield settings. Their historic

significance resonates with us as we handle a tangible piece of battles past.

But let's face it: In most cases, the things we collect simply tickle our hearts and stoke our fires. We like this stuff because it's so cool—most of the time it's as simple as that.

So as we plan for that next acquisition, here's a way to find inspiration: Go to the mother lode of militaria—military museums. They can be found throughout the USA. From small, local collections to awe-inspiring national treasures, the list of museums goes on and on.

NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM PHOTO



“THEIR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE RESONATES WITH US AS WE HANDLE A TANGIBLE PIECE OF BATTLES PAST.”

023

INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

Here are five top museums to put on your "must see" list:

1. SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Washington, D.C.
<http://americanhistory.si.edu>

Let's start at the top with the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. This world-class museum is the granddaddy of all collections revolving around anything and everything to do

with things American.

Here you'll find an unimaginably comprehensive collection that preserves more than 3 million artifacts of American history and culture, from the War of Independence to the present day.

Most important from our perspective: the museum's superb military collections include ordnance, firearms, swords, uniforms and insignia, national and military flags and banners, and an incredible array of other related objects.

This collection contains an

enormous depth of items, many with mind-bending significance. Some 3,000 military small arms and 2,400 civilian firearms document the mechanical and technological history of the infantryman's weapons from the beginning of the gunpowder era to the present. Among the 4,000 swords and knives in the collection are many spectacular presentation pieces.

Exhibits in the east wing of the third floor focus on the United States at war. They include "The



An aerial view of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

Price of Freedom: Americans at War,” which surveys the history of America’s military from the French and Indian Wars to the conflict in Iraq.

Hardware fanatics will be astonished by the depth, quality and variety of firearms present. Every time I’ve visited the museum I’ve come away completely amazed.

Moreover, the historical significance of many items simply stuns the senses: George Washington’s army uniform, sword and scabbard; George Armstrong Custer’s buckskin coat; the chairs Civil War generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant used during the surrender ceremony at Appomattox Court House, Virginia; the original Star Spangled Banner.

Equally interesting are more mundane battlefield objects such as a Willys Jeep used during World War II or a restored UH-1H Huey helicopter, deployed in Vietnam in 1966.

No matter which facets of military collecting interest you most, the Smithsonian National Museum of American History serves as the mother ship for just about everything related to the history of warfare viewed from America.

2. NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM

Fort Benning, Georgia

nationalinfantrymuseum.org

A 200-acre tract of Georgia hardwoods and pines just outside the gates of Fort Benning, one of the U.S. Army’s largest installations, serves as home to The National Infantry Museum.

The National Infantry Museum preserves and

displays one of the greatest collections of military artifacts in the world, a treasure trove that will surely delight collectors. These items gain greater significance through the museum’s efforts to help you “meet” the infantryman face-to-face—to better understand why an Infantryman does what he does and why he puts himself in harm’s way in defense of our country.

The museum’s signature exhibit is “The Last 100 Yards” where a gently sloped ramp contains life-sized dioramas depicting significant battles in the Infantry’s history, including Yorktown, Antietam, Soissons, Normandy, Corregidor, Soam-Ni, LZ X-Ray and Iraq.

You’ll come to better understand the day Confederates held off Union Soldiers much longer than expected in the Battle of Antietam at Cross Burnside Bridge. Overhead, a rare WWII troop glider made of fabric-covered wood and metal hovers in its landing run. Witness the landing on D-Day and Rangers scaling Pointe du Hoc. A Vietnam era Huey helicopter sets the scene for the first big battle of the war. A Bradley Fighting Vehicle damaged by a roadside bomb in Iraq leans precariously over the side of the ramp.

Containing the largest collection of artifacts on display in the museum, “The World at War” gallery tells the story of World War II. A series of audio-visual presentations transports you nearly 80 years into the past, following the rise of the Axis powers and telling the story of the “Greatest Generation’s” fight against the forces of fascism.

On hand is the equipment and weaponry that made U.S. victory possible, including Jeeps, rifles, parachutes and flamethrowers. The gallery also displays a wide variety of uniforms and personal effects—both ally and enemy—including Audie Murphy’s service ribbons, Hermann Goering’s diamond-studded Field Marshall baton and Emperor Hirohito’s sword collection.



(above) The National Infantry Museum in Fort Benning, Georgia, preserves and displays one of the greatest collections of military artifacts in the world.

(below) A bird's eye view of "The Last 100 Yards" exhibit at the National Infantry Museum.



“FROM SMALL, LOCAL COLLECTIONS TO AWE-INSPIRING NATIONAL TREASURES, THE LIST OF MUSEUMS GOES ON AND ON.”

3. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

Triangle, Virginia

usmcmuseum.com

Over decades of hard-fought combat from the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli, the U.S. Marine Corps has forged its own special esprit de corps and more than a little bit of pride. All that and more, along with quite a collection of hardware, is on display at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Virginia, near MCB Quantico.

The Museum collects and displays a full array of items related to the history of the Marine Corps and conveys the history of the Marine Corps through a series of galleries containing multiple exhibits.

In the World War II Gallery, the “Uncommon Valor” display recalls hard fought battles against a formidable opponent in the Pacific. This exhibit explains how the Marine Corps entered World War II as a small expeditionary force with outdated equipment and an unproven new mission—amphibious assault.

The gripping story of the Pacific campaigns are told with the help of tanks, artillery pieces, aircraft, small arms and the everyday “junk on a bunk” that belonged to the individual Marine—a fascinating assortment of period items that might be otherwise long forgotten.

In another fascinating section, visitors are “briefed” on their pending assault landing on the island of Iwo Jima before “boarding” a Higgins Boat for the perilous trip to the beach. Motion, sound and video provide a realistic experience. Close by is the flag raised famously on Iwo Jima’s Mount Suribachi and photographed by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal.

In a poignant display, some 6,000 small Marine and US Navy insignias represent the cost in human lives to take that one island.

4. NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MUSEUM

New Orleans, Louisiana

nationalww2museum.org

Originally founded in 2000 by author and historian Stephen Ambrose as the D-Day Museum, The National WWII Museum offers an unforgettable way to experience World War II. Offering an artful blend of hardware large and small, plus an impactful blend of sweeping narrative and touching personal detail, the museum features attention-grabbing exhibits, state-of-the-art multimedia experiences, and an expansive collection of artifacts and first-person oral histories.

The museum’s vault houses more than 100,000 artifacts. While many items in the collection—including but not limited to Allied and Axis uniforms, weaponry, vehicles, medals, diaries, letters, artwork, photographs and other mementos—are on exhibit, the majority are kept safely in storage to be used for research and future exhibitions, or are being restored to their original condition.

The museum has a large collection of memoirs of wartime experiences, as well as an impressive collection of oral histories conducted with veterans from all branches and who served on all fronts.

5. GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

<http://www.nps.gov/gett/index.htm>

Among the many Civil War museums and battlefield sites open to visitors, Gettysburg National Military Park and its on-site Gettysburg Museum of the American Civil War offer a distinctive combination of small arms, cannon, militaria and other artifacts in a setting that offers visitors an in-depth view into the famous story of the Battle of Gettysburg and its significance to our nation’s history.

The museum’s collection of artifacts and archival items provide visitors perspectives from President

INSIDE THE WALLS

These facilities not only house museum-quality hardware including firearms (what else would you expect?), but they also do a wonderful job of putting these items into context while they relay the human side of the story.

Better yet, these displays incorporate many "supporting cast" items, such as uniforms, edged weapons, canteens and rations, field radios and "Mae West" inflatable life vests that round out the full story.



Abraham Lincoln, Confederate President Jefferson Davis, Generals George Gordon Meade and Robert E. Lee, soldiers, war correspondents and civilians.

Throughout the museum, interactive and visual stations help visitors absorb the full significance of the objects on display and the furious action that took place so long ago.

Of the 12 galleries, 11 are based on phrases from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and organized around the museum's major themes, including the Gettysburg Campaign, and the causes and consequences of the American Civil War.

The incredible variety of weapons used by soldiers on both side of this conflict are on full display in the museum, and hundreds of cannon are spread around the 6,000 acres of battleground that is open and readily accessible to visitors.

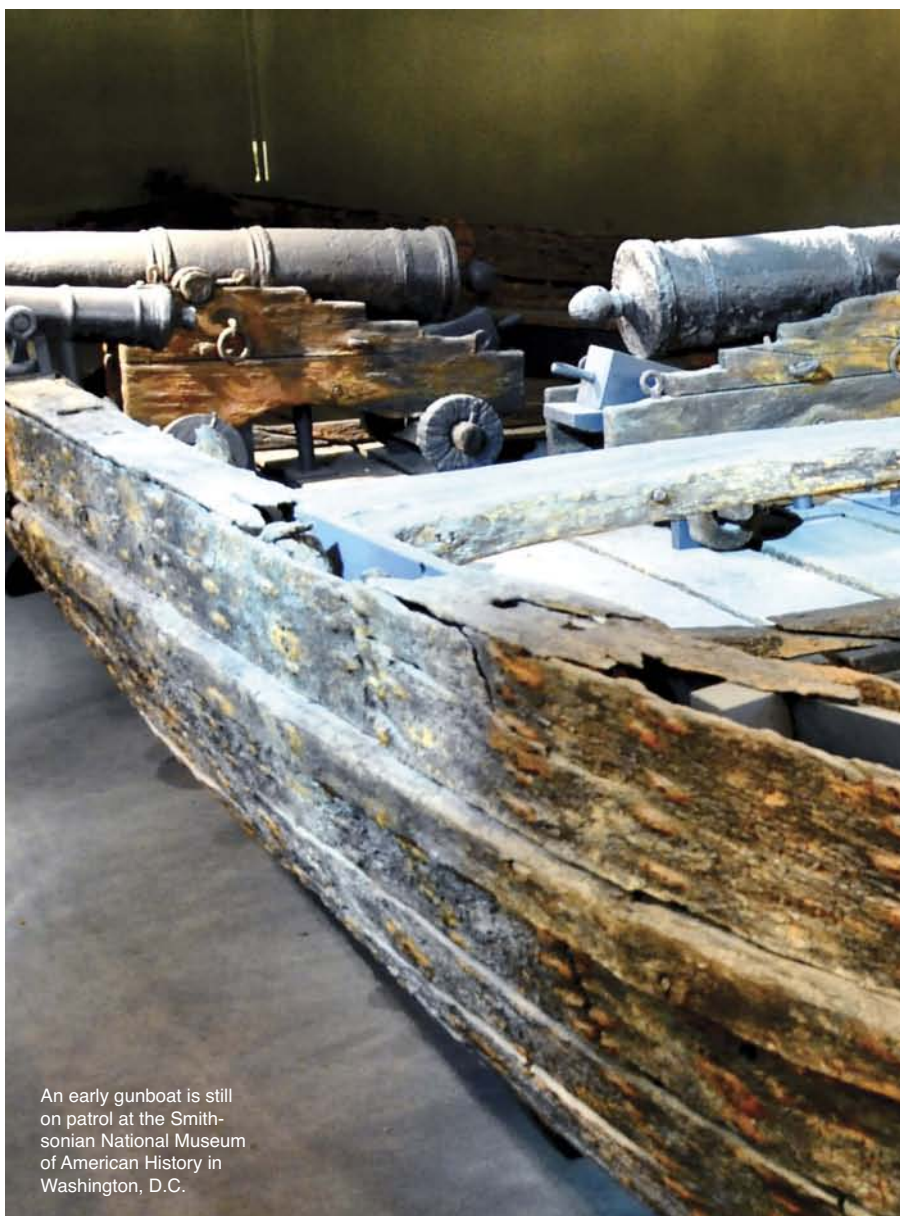
One special feature offered at Gettysburg National Military Park is the ability to tour the widespread battlefield with a Licensed Battlefield Guide privately in your own car or by bus.

Two types of cannons were used in the battle of Gettysburg and are easily identified: bronze smoothbore Napoleons that appear greenish-blue due to oxidation, and cast-iron rifled cannon, painted black. It is a true privilege and genuine pleasure to be able to touch these old war horses, and the photograph you'll take home as you stand beside these historic artillery pieces will be a point of pride for years to come. **IMS**

KM Lee is a lifelong shooter and an active participant in all aspects of the shooting sports including match competition.



With the tank standing guard out front, there's no mistake about the subject matter of the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana.



An early gunboat is still on patrol at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.



NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM PHOTO

BY THE NUMBERS

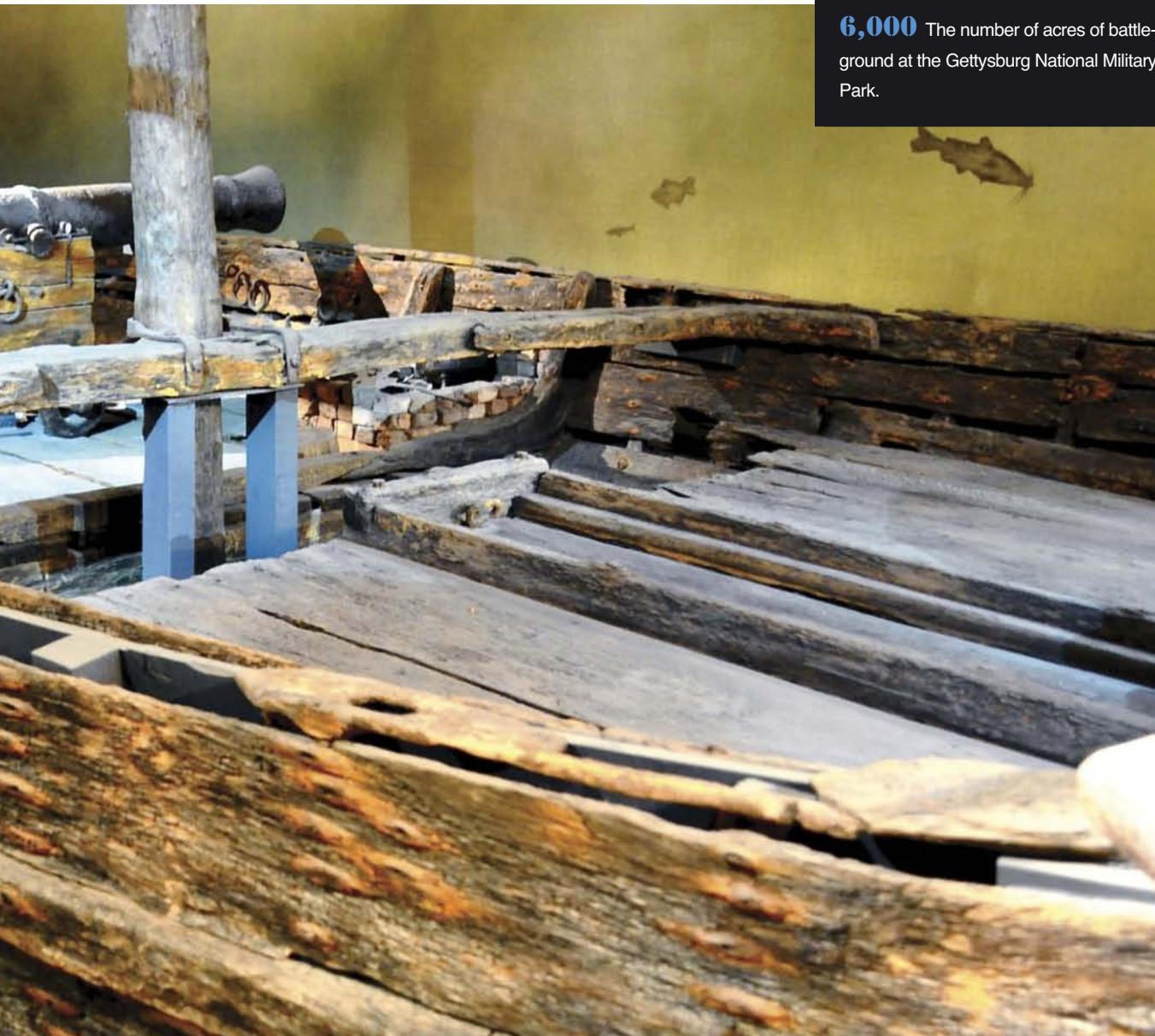
3 MILLION The number of artifacts from the War of Independence to the present day you will find at the Smithsonian.

200 In acres, the size of tract that is home to the National Infantry Museum.

6,000 The number of U.S. servicemen who lost their lives at Iwo Jima. These fatalities are represented by small insignias at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

100,000 The number of artifacts in the National WWII museum.

6,000 The number of acres of battleground at the Gettysburg National Military Park.





AN AMERICAN LEGEND

FROM THE MILITARY TO MOBS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, THE THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN PLAYED A DUAL ROLE IN HISTORY

■ Text and Photos by Chuck Taylor

It was intended as a “trench broom.” Initially conceived by General John Talliaferro Thompson as a military arm during the “Great War” of 1914-18, the Thompson submachine gun (SMG) was supposed to be used for clearing trenches and other fortifications of the era.

The use of such automatic weapons in ground combat was new and caused the methods and strategies of the day to become obsolete almost overnight, making World War I the most gruesome war in history.

And that's just the beginning of its journey.

TOO LATE FOR WW I

General Thompson was unable to get his “trench broom” into production quickly enough to facilitate its use in combat, although crates of “Annihilator” prototypes were reportedly on the docks in New York awaiting shipment when the November 1918 armistice was signed.

Thus, he, along with his fledgling company, Auto-Ordnance Corporation, found themselves with a fully developed and capable mini-machine gun and no war in

which to demonstrate its prowess.

The most obvious solution was to sell it commercially on the military and civilian markets. The U.S. government, and particularly the U.S. Marine Corps, were most impressed by the M1921 Thompson at its initial demonstrations and predicted a great future for it. Unfortunately, due to apathetic attitudes and the resulting shrunken budgets they created (World War I was called “the war to end all wars”), no large orders were received.

Part of the problem was that the military-industrial complex of that time failed to understand the con-



General John Taliaferro Thompson, the father of the weapon that bears his name, at a military and police demonstration of the Model 1921 TSMG in that same year.





The ill-fated M1923 Thompson was actually the forerunner of what we now call a SAW—a Squad Automatic Weapon, chambered for a .45 caliber cartridge that was equivalent to a heavy-loaded .45 Colt. In many ways, it was ahead of its time, since military planners of the day were still committed to antiquated methods of warfare.

“IT PERFORMED QUITE WELL IN THE SHORT-RANGE, HIGH-INTENSITY FIRE-FIGHTS TYPICAL OF SUCH WARFARE....”

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

cept behind Thompson's creation. To them, small arms were either the .30 caliber M1903 Springfield or M1917 Enfield, the M1911 .45 ACP pistol or the big water-cooled Browning M1917 30 caliber belt-fed machine gun.

To the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps, the idea of a hand-held automatic weapon was the also-new .30-caliber Browning M1918 BAR, not a compact, handy gun that shot pistol ammunition.

The Army finally got around to actually testing the M1921 TSMG in 1922 and rejected it for nebulous reasons. The Marine Corps did not test it at all, claiming that the Army did all the testing and whatever they decided, the Corps would concur.

When the TSMG wasn't stan-

dardized by the U.S. military, Auto-Ordnance's troubles began to appear in the form of poor sales revenues. In spite of the fact that the gun was available for sale to the general public, its high price (\$200 in 1921) precluded success.

With financial disaster looming, General Thompson's son, Marcelus, began aggressively marketing the TSMG to various law-enforcement agencies, hoping to create the image of a super-effective police weapon. To be sure, police officials were duly impressed by the weapon's firepower and a few were ordered, but not enough to keep Auto-Ordnance "in the black."

However, fate intervened and the U.S. Post Office Department temporarily rescued Auto-Ordnance by ordering several hundred

M1921 TSMG to combat a rash of mail-car robberies, and a few police agencies followed suit.

However, interestingly enough, those same Post Office Department TSMGs were given to the U.S. Marine Corps shortly thereafter and taken en masse to the Central American jungle where the Marines were engaged in a number of "Banana Wars."

Not surprisingly, it performed quite well in the short-range, high-intensity firefights typical of such warfare and the Marines who used them became quite fond of them.

THE GANGSTER GUN

In the United States, the TSMG found its first place in American society in the hands of the gangs during the "beer wars" of the 1920s.



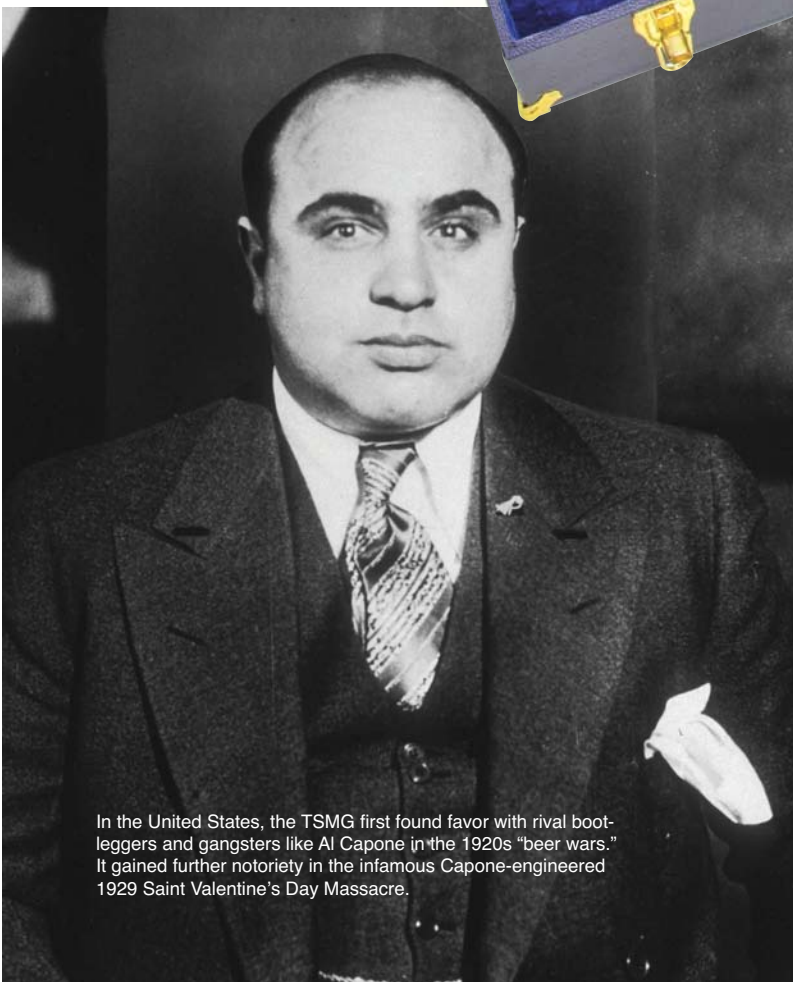
The Type C 100-round drum was heavy and prone to malfunction, but it was quickly replaced by the handier and more reliable Type L 50-round drum. However, in 1940 the Army settled the controversy by dropping the drum altogether as being too heavy, noisy and dirt-sensitive, replacing it entirely with 20- and 30-round box magazines.



Many of the 1921 and 1928AC TSMGs were offered with a hard case, known later as an "FBI Hard Case." A Type L 50-round drum and four 20-round box magazines were also included.

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INSIDE MILITARY SUPPLIES



In the United States, the TSMG first found favor with rival bootleggers and gangsters like Al Capone in the 1920s "beer wars." It gained further notoriety in the infamous Capone-engineered 1929 Saint Valentine's Day Massacre.

THOMPSONS FOR THE IRA

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) took notice of the Thompson and surreptitiously ordered 653 of them. However, U.S. Customs officials confiscated 450 of them before they could leave the country, so only a small number actually reached IRA hands. Nonetheless, the M1921 TSMG quickly became a favorite, even to the degree that Irish poet Dominic Behan wrote the following:

We're off to Dublin, in the green,
Where helmets glisten in the sun,
Where the bayonets flash and rifle crash,
To the echo of a Thompson gun.

There are also some interesting postscripts to the TSMG's use by the IRA. Because no actual U.S. laws prohibited the export of weapons to other countries, the IRA was able to obtain the release of the confiscated TSMGs and used them continuously for the next 60 years in their unrelenting underground war against the British.

THOMPSON VARIATIONS

There were five production versions of TSMG (excluding the ill-fated semi-auto M1927, which never saw production): the M1921, M1923, M1928, M1 and M1A1.

The M1921 and M1928. These were basically identical except for their recoil spring assemblies and actuators, and the Cutts compensator utilized on the M1928.

Originally, the M1921 had a cyclic rate of 800 to 900 rpm. Based upon its use by the U.S. Marines in Latin America in the 1920s, the U.S. Navy considered that too high for efficient use. It also sported a vertical foregrip, which was deemed too cumbersome and fragile for military use.

The Navy wanted its rate of fire reduced to 550 to 600 rpm, the vertical foregrip replaced with a horizontal one and a means of attaching a sling.

Auto Ordnance made the necessary changes to a number of existing M1921s, which were then dubbed the "U.S. Navy Model of 1928" (and, later, the M1928 AC). These guns were later known as "Navy Overstamps" because the number "1" in 1921 was over-stamped with the number "8", making the model stamping appear as "Model of 192B".

M1 and M1A1. The Cutts compensator and Blish locking system of the M1921 and M1928 were a continuous source of controversy as to whether or not they were actually necessary.

However, in its quest to make the TSMG less expensive and time-consuming to produce, the Army settled the matter by dropping them entirely on the M1 and M1A1 versions. Even though many of the parts were interchangeable on all TSMGs, the M1 and M1A1 utilized a completely different upper and lower receiver than the M1921/M1928 and would not accept the Type C (100-round) or Type L (50-round) drum magazine.

This, much to the dismay of the highly idealistic General Thompson, became the era of the TSMG.

Although much over-publicized by the news media, the Thompson was used in a number of gangland killings, the most spectacular of which was the Al Capone-organized 1928 Saint Valentine's Day Massacre.

This seemed to put the TSMG on the wrong side of Auto-Ordnance's motto: "On the Side of Law and Order." Needless to say, civilian sales were not stimulated by such goings on.

The TSMG, now called by a variety of names such as, "Tommy Gun," "Squirtgun," "Chopper," "Chicago Typewriter" and "Piano," was further maligned by its use by 1930s depression-era bandits John Dillinger, "Pretty Boy" Floyd, Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker, "Ma" Barker and "Babyface" Nelson.

Their nefarious exploits were much publicized in the news media and catapulted the Thompson to the status of being an underworld symbol, causing even

more heartache to General Thompson.

FBI BUYS THOMPSONS

Still, the storm cloud had a silver lining. Though much dismayed by the illegal use of his creation, Auto-Ordnance began to see a definite uptick in sales to law-enforcement agencies that wanted to meet these crooks on at least an equal basis.

The FBI purchased a sizeable number of both M1921 and M1928 TSMGs for their nationwide armories and used them with great effect against the "motorized bandits" of the 1920s.

Even today, though officially retired and supposedly withdrawn from service, the Thompson remains in many FBI armories throughout the United States.

The National Firearms Act of 1934 curbed over-the-counter sales of the Thompson and other fully automatic weaponry. However, the criminal element quickly discovered that it was much easier to steal the weapons they needed from police departments

and National Guard armories, rather than buy them.

U.S. ARMY'S SECOND LOOK

While all this was going on, the U.S. Army retested the Thompson and, in 1936, adopted it for use by motorcycle dispatch riders and cavalry (remember that the horse-cavalry wasn't disbanded until 1942).

In 1939, the threat of a second world war and the distressing realization that the submachine gun would play a major role in any modern conflict jolted the U.S. government out of its isolationist euphoria and began looking for a suitable SMG.

Finally, someone in the Ordnance Department remembered the TSMG and arranged for it to be again tested. It passed Army tests with flying colors and was adopted in its M1928 version, thus officially becoming the U.S. military's first submachine gun.

The British (who had felt its sting in the hands of the IRA) had denounced the TSMG as a "gang-



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INSIDE MILITARY SUPPLIES

**“IT’S CONTROLLABLE IN SUSTAINED
FULLY AUTOMATIC FIRE, EASY TO
MAINTAIN, AND REGARDED HIGHLY
BY ALL THOSE WHO HAVE USED IT.”**

WANTED



JOHN HERBERT DILLINGER

On June 23, 1934, HOMER S. CUMMINGS, Attorney General of the United States, under the authority vested in him by an Act of Congress approved June 6, 1934, offered a reward of

\$10,000.00

for the capture of John Herbert Dillinger or a reward of

\$5,000.00

for information leading to the arrest of John Herbert Dillinger.

DESCRIPTION

Age, 32 years; Height, 5 feet 7-1/8 inches; Weight, 153 pounds; Build, medium; Hair, medium chestnut; Eyes, gray; Complexion, medium; Occupation, machinist; Marks and scars, 1/2 inch scar back left hand, scar middle upper lip, brown mole between eyebrows.

(above) During the desperate days of the 1930s Great Depression, the TSMG was popular with so-called "motorized bandits" like John Dillinger, who appreciated its awesome firepower.

(opposite page) The US Marines issued the M1A1 TSMG for tank crews as late as 1969. In this Tet 1968 photo, a wounded U.S. Marine with his M1A1 TSMG is seen during the house-to-house fighting in Hue.

ster's weapon," now couldn't get enough of them.

General Thompson's dream had, after 20 years of hardship, become a reality but, sadly, both he and his son Marcellus died before its adoption. He never knew the critical role the weapon would play in World War II and subsequent conflicts.

Indeed, U.S. troops encountered large quantities of both

M1921 and M1928 Thompsons in the hands of communist Chinese troops during the Korean War (the result of providing them with the weapon to fight the Japanese in World War II), again in the Vietnam War (where as a 20-year old Infantry Lieutenant, I carried one myself) and countless "Dirty Little Wars" in the Middle East, Latin America and Africa.

The Thompson was declared officially obsolete in 1942 (it

was, after all, a first generation submachine gun design) and was slated for replacement by the newer, cheaper, second generation M3/M3A1 "Greasegun."

However, once again, fate intervened and the TSMG continued to see service as a tank crewman's weapon with the U.S. Marine Corps as late as 1969. Immense quantities of TSMGs were exported to other countries via "lend-lease" programs and civilian sales. And, of course, the IRA continued to use it well into the 1980s.

THOMPSON'S LEGACY

Tactically speaking, the TSMG is still an effective, though heavy (almost 12 pounds loaded with a 30-round box magazine), submachine gun. It's controllable in sustained fully automatic fire, easy to maintain and regarded highly by all who have used it.

It's still commonly encountered all over the world and will likely continue to be seen for decades to come. To millions of people, it is visually synonymous with the term, "submachine gun." As such, it remains an American icon, forever enshrined in our history and is as American as apple pie. **IMS**

Chuck Taylor is a decorated Vietnam Veteran, four-weapon Combat Master and an expert in SWAT, counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations.





COLT AND S&W REVOLVERS IN .45 ACP SAW MUCH SERVICE IN BOTH WORLD WARS AND BEYOND

THE U.S. M1917

■ TEXT AND PHOTOS BY JIM DICKSON

As WW1 raged across the Atlantic, U.S. Army observers were quick to note the devastating effect the German Luger was having on the British and French troops in the bitter close-quarters combat within the trenches.

The Germans were ramping up Luger production to try to get a Luger in every frontline soldier's hands regardless of his rank, while the British and French officers

solidly opposed their enlisted men having handguns, which were deemed an officer's privilege.

When the United States entered the war, the Army put pistol production at the highest priority. With a nation of pistoleers heading for trench combat where the pistol shone at its finest, there was no question that the more pistols the better.

Unfortunately, there was no way to make enough pistols in time. The M1911 was the greatest fighting pistol of all time, but

wasn't there something else that could take up the slack?

THE RESURGENCE OF REVOLVERS

Fortunately, Colt had their magnificent New Service revolver while S&W had their 2nd Model Hand Ejector revolver. The Colt New Service had already seen Army service as the M1909 revolver chambered for a new version of the .45 Colt with as large a rim as would fit in the cylinder. S&W had already made their 2nd

Colt's New Service revolver (left) was a large, sturdy revolver that easily handled the .45 ACP cartridge. Both the Colt and S&W (right) versions became known as the M1917.



POINT SHOOTING WITH A REVOLVER

3 Tips for Better Performance

Some people object to the small U notch fixed rear sight on the M1917, but the pistol is supposed to be pointed like a shotgun. You don't hit birds on the wing by using sights as well as you do by point shooting and the same goes for hitting moving men in a gunfight.

Once you develop skill at point shooting, your accuracy will exceed anything that you can attain with the fanciest sights and you will do it infinitely faster. Point shooting is how you hit the hard targets when hunting and how you stay alive in gunfights. Target shooting with sights, even a flash sight picture, is how you die in a gunfight against a worthy opponent.

- 1** To learn to point shoot, adopt a strict form. Once you have mastered this you can hit from any position, but you have to learn to walk before you can run.
- 2** Assume the classic duelist stance with your body sideways to the target. This also makes you the smallest possible target for your enemy. Fully extend your arm with wrist and elbow straight and your chin resting on your shoulder. Ignore the gun and fix your eyes on the intended target.
- 3** The targets can be a row of matches or empty .22 shells as far away as you can see them well. Point and fire at each one in turn. If you miss one, go on to the next or you will just miss again in the same place. Soon you will be hitting them in either double action or single action mode of fire as long as you ignore the sights and concentrate on looking at the target.



HOLSTERS AND MOON CLIPS

For those wanting to use their M1917 revolvers, there are plenty of accessories out there.

Pacific Canvas and Leather Co. Inc. makes the Mil-Spec. M1917 leather holster in both left and right hand versions. They also make the M1917 three-pocket canvas pouch that enables you to carry six loaded half-moon clips on your belt. Quality and appearance is indistinguishable from the originals.

Numrich Arms, also known as Gun Parts Co., supplies both half-moon clips and a nifty little unloading tool for the half-moon clips. These are a real problem without a tool to deal with them. They can get to be hard on your fingers fast.

Brownell's supplies both full-moon clips that hold a full cylinder full, as well as a tool to unload the full moon clips. These make for the fastest reloading time possible with any revolver. A full-moon clip is quite a bit faster than the best speed loader because you just drop it in and shut the cylinder. Aside from being fast and efficient, the Brownell's full moon clip loader is just plain fun to use.

HKS Products, Inc. has .45 speed loader pouches that work with .45ACP full-moon clips as well. They fall in a bit deep, but just stick your finger in the hollow center of the full moon clip and they come right out.



Half moon clips that held three rounds of ammo were necessary in order to use the rimless .45 ACP cartridges in the M1917 revolvers.

“THESE WERE THE STATE-OF-THE-ART REVOLVERS OF THE TIME AND...REMAIN AMONG THE FINEST DOUBLE ACTION REVOLVERS EVER MADE.”

Model Hand Ejector in .455 for the British in 1915-16.

The only problem was Ordnance was determined to avoid the logistical nightmare of multiple pistol calibers. They already had revolvers in inventory in .38 Long, .45 Colt, and .45 Colt M1909 in addition to the new standard .45 ACP cartridge, and they were not going to have a replay of the logistical problems they had in the Spanish American War. No, the revolvers would have to be made to work with the .45 ACP cartridge if Ordnance was going to buy them.

The solution was S&W's patented half-moon clips that en-

abled three rimless cartridges to be snapped into a half-moon shaped stamped spring steel clip. These also acted as speedloaders and positively prevented anyone getting an extracted shell caught between the extractor and the cylinder.

Despite the patent, the military made S&W allow Colt to use the half-moon clips for free in the Colt New Service revolver.

These were big, rugged revolvers with an overall length of 10.8 inches and a weight of 2.5 pounds for the Colt and 2.25 pounds for the S&W. They had 5.5-inch barrels and a blued finish

with smooth wood grips. Guns rebuilt for WW2 use were parkerized and often had checkered plastic grips added.

These were the state-of-the-art revolvers of the time and to this day remain among the finest double action revolvers ever made. If you already have one of these M1917's, there is no new revolver out there with sufficient improvements to justify you changing.

The workmanship was the finest that the two factories were capable of and the Ordnance inspectors made sure nothing less got past them. The M1917s were guns that a man could take pride in and that



041

A good leather holster like this Berns Martin breakfront model makes carrying a large revolver such as the M1917 much easier.



There are specialized tools available to make working with moon clips much easier.

PUTTING OLD GUNS TO THE TEST

For this article, a WW II rebuilt Colt M1917 with parkerized finish and checkered plastic grips and a S&W in excellent condition with the original blue finish were test fired with 250 rounds of Armscor 230-grain FMJ ammo.

Both guns easily kept all their shots inside a 2-inch circle at 25 yards. These big, heavy revolvers make accurate, rapid double action fire easy. I have always found that the forward slanted grips of the Colt New Service pointed better for me than the rearward slanted grips of the S&W.

The profile of the Colt grips is a carry over from the Colt Single Action Army revolver. The back of the grips may be a different configuration but the curve of the front part is the curve of the SAA, a gun long famed for its good pointing properties.

Recoil was not felt with either gun. They are extremely pleasant to shoot and easy to hit with in either double action or single action fire. I just wished that I hadn't run out of ammo so quickly. These are really fun guns to shoot.

After shooting, the clean up was made much easier than it was in the two World Wars thanks to the high tech Shooter's Choice bore cleaner, copper remover, and FP-10 lubricant.

gave confidence to their users.

When word first leaked out that the Army was adopting the M1917 revolver, it started a rumor that the M1911 was a failure and a mysterious new technology revolver was replacing it. Wartime scuttlebutt never changes.

The military issued the M1917 revolvers to front line troops in the Great War, but they always particularly favored arming the MP's and security guards with revolvers.

After the war, most of the M1917's were withdrawn from service and placed in storage, with many being loaned out to the Post Office, the Treasury Dept. and other government agencies.

When WW II started, they were taken out of storage and 21,000 were sent to the front lines with the remainder being used by the MP's and security guards.

The military continued to use these extensively through 1975. That's 58 years of faithful service. They were used by the tunnel rats and MACV-SOG in Vietnam. Both the Philippine and South Vietnamese military used large numbers of them.

Colt continued to make the New Service revolver until WW

II, but did not reintroduce it after the war.

S&W sold 25,000 M1917's to Brazil in 1937. These new guns were marked with the Brazilian Crest on the lockplate. The M1917 S&W continued in production until it was replaced with the M1950 target revolver.

In the 1960s and '70s, large numbers of M1917 revolvers came on the market and today many people own them. They are as fine a double action revolver as you could want and the big .45 ACP round is effective without excessive recoil.

Accuracy of both these big revolvers with their fine six-groove rifling and the .45ACP cartridge has never been questioned. Both have a sterling reputation.

While some might consider the M1917 a bit large for concealed carry, the fact remains that many men have done it successfully over the years. The wear and tear on my old shoulder holster for the M1917 bears testimony to that.

STILL A GOOD CHOICE

The Colt and S&W M1917 double action revolvers are effective man-stoppers that can be reloaded faster than any other revolver. They can be carried openly or concealed and will kill

any game in North America. And if you want a good revolver for the night stand, then you really can't do better than the M1917.

IMS

Jim Dickson has written for the gun magazines in 12 countries for nearly 30 years.





Post World War I fancy Mexican loop holster for the M1917 revolver formerly used by a Montana cowboy who valued the virtues of the M1917 .45.

“POINT SHOOTING IS HOW YOU HIT THE HARD TARGETS WHEN HUNTING AND HOW YOU STAY ALIVE IN GUNFIGHTS.”



Extracting spent casings is positive when using full moon clips in the M1917 revolvers.



MODERNIZING THE MOSIN NAGANT WITH SOME HOME GUNSMITHING

SURPLUS SURGERY

■ Text and Photos by Abe Elias

Remember when a day at the range literally meant a day at the range?

Ammo was affordable, and you could sit there and have fun honing your skills.

What if I told you there is a way to get around those high ammo prices while still shooting at distances out to 200 yards? We have seen a number of battle rifles get a second lease on life when they become popular with the public. People used to rebuild Mausers

and Enfields. Today, the Mosin seems to be the project rifle. Mosin enthusiasts now have more after-market accessories available than ever before, making it prime for a rebuild.

Joining the Mosin club is cheap because the Nagant runs anywhere from \$139 to \$200, providing it is not a sniper model.

SELECTING A MOSIN

You will want to do some research when selecting a Mosin. There were many Mosins made in

many factories, and the machining varies from god-awful sloppy to clean.

Do not expect today's standards, but then that is one of the beauties of the Mosin. A Mosin is a sturdy, serviceable rifle that you do not have to worry about abusing.

Keep in mind that the round receivers are the ones for which there are the most after-market parts. Tula models have some of the best receivers. Obviously, you want to check the bore on any rifle you buy. The Finnish models have



(below) Here is an Original Mosin 91/30 next to the Archangel rebuild. Notice the decrease in length, making the rifle easier to handle.





SUPPLIERS

Archangel Manufacturing (stock)
800-438-2547

info@promaginindustries.com
www.archangelmanufacturing.com

ATI (stock, bolt kit, scope bases)
Advance Technology International USA, LLC
800-925-2522
www.atigunstocks.com

Bluegrass Stock Company (Stock)
270-789-8206
www.bg-gunstocks.com

Nevr-Dull (cleaner)
The George Basch Company Inc.
516-378-8100
info@nevrdull.com
www.nevrdull.com

Rock Solid Industries (converted bolt and scope bases)
Rock Solid Industries
660-259-2832
customerservice@rocksolidind.com
www.rocksolidind.com

Simple Green
Available at Home Depot

Socamo.com
www.socamo.com (firing pin spring)
Store yet to open; visit forum

Timney Triggers
Timney Triggers LLO
623-223-1111
customerservice@timneyuse.com
www.timneytrigger.com

a reputation for the best barrels, so if you find one and can afford the extra cost, get it. There is a carbine version but they also run extra.

For the purpose of the rebuild, a Model 1891/30 is perfect. This model was in service from 1891 until 1945, so there have been millions of these made.

THE CLEAN-UP

Before starting a rebuild, there is some cleaning to be done. Keep in mind these guns have been in storage for many years, and the Russian version of Cosmoline can gum up a rifle. Start by giving it a good scrub with some hot water and Simple Green. I have also found that Shooters Choice "Aqua Clean" products work well.

Once you have cleaned off all the Cosmoline, then it is time to clean the barrel and bore. Some of the rifles are so gummed up, the bores and barrels will actually look dark. To brighten those back up, you can use either polishing compounds or Nevrdull.

For the polishing compounds, take a 20-gauge gun swab and load it up. If you want, you can insert it into the chamber and spin it using a drill. After cleaning the chamber, you can run some swabs of Nevrdull down the barrel or just give the barrel a good cleaning.

To use Nevrdull, I simply wrap cloth around a small brush and build it up until it fits in the chamber. Then I do the same again with the barrel. With a shiny bore and barrel, you are ready to go.

Before you start to build, you will have to look around at what is available and what format you want to build. Do you want your Mosin to be a bench rifle, a "tactical cool" marksman rifle or maybe even a scout rifle?

DRILLING THE RECEIVER

A number of companies make scope mounts for the Mosin: ATI makes an over-the-receiver mount, and Rock Solid Industries makes both over-the-receiver and forward scout mounts.

If you choose Rock Solid's scout system, you will have to disassemble the rear iron sight. Rock Solid makes their mounting holes to the exact same specs as ATI, so once you have drilled and tapped for one you can use either.

There are plenty of jigs to accurately drill and tap a receiver. I normally use the Weaver drilling and tapping jig. Strip the action from the stock and set the magazine aside.

With the action stripped and the bolt out, clamp the barrel in a vise, then line up the scope mount. Using a woodworker's soft jawed clamp, you can clamp the scope mount to the receiver using the flat top of the base and flat under-

"YOU HAVE TO LIKE IT WHEN YOU ... GET IN THERE, GET YOUR HANDS A LITTLE DIRTY AND COME OUT WITH SOMETHING OF YOUR OWN."



The rifle is put on safe by pulling back the bolt and rotating it slightly counter-clockwise as in the picture. The safety on the Mosin is sometimes a mystery to people.



At the top is the reworked bent bolt by Rock Solid Industries. At bottom is the original straight bolt, and below that is the conversion kit from ATI that requires a hack saw drill and file with a tap (tap, drill bit and screw provided) to install; no welding needed.

At the top is a finished project with a shortened barrel, scope mount base and Timney trigger installed. On the bottom is an original action stripped from the stock. It's not pretty but it will take a beating.



(above) You don't need a whole shop to mount any of the scope mounts made for the Mosin. I put the bare action in my Tip-ton gun vise and used clamps to line up the mount. After the mount was lined up and clamped in place, I put it in a vise and drilled it with a hand drill.



To ensure the face is square I cleaned up the cut with a file and then used Brownell's 90 degree cutter with a "T" handle for the final facing before the countersink.

“MY REBUILT MOSIN WAS A RIFLE THAT I HAD A HAND IN BUILDING AND THAT I COULD USE FOR A NUMBER OF THINGS, FROM HUNTING TO PLINKING.”

side of the receiver.

Check to make sure it runs straight with the barrel when installing the Scout mount. You might want to install it straight with the receiver if you find the barrel is over-clocked.

I found it easier to line up the scope mounts by first cleaning the receiver surface up on the slack belt section of my belt sander using a 220 grit belt. It removed any of the irregularities from the machining on the receiver. After sanding the receiver, I used Cold Blue to blue the newly exposed metal. I also found it easier to line the scope mounts up using my laser bore sight.

Once clamped into place, mark the hole placement with a set punch. Both companies provide a drill and tap; however, you might need to go out and buy a set just for the handles. When you go to drill, make a point of re-punching your marks to ensure they are clear and crisp. Remarketing will help make sure the bit does not walk.

Use plenty of cutting fluid when drilling and tapping. I use Brownell's cutting fluid to keep the chips flowing and prevent the tap from binding. Once you have drilled and tapped the first hole install the scope mount using one screw and check for alignment again. With the scope mount in place, you can use the mount as a guide to mark the second hole again and then drill.

Clean the chips away using compressed air and degrease the holes with brake cleaner. The screws provided will be too long and will have to be ground to size.

At this point, I reassembled the rifle, mounted a scope and took it to the range for some preliminary shooting so I could do a before-and-after comparison after my rebuild was completed.

STIFFENING THE BARREL

All the 91/30 barrels are close to 29 inches long. If you want to increase accuracy, you will want to stiffen the barrel and the only way to do that is to shorten it.

You can chop it to anywhere between 22 and 24 inches. I went with 22 inches. I put the bolt back in and measured with a rod down the barrel to the bolt face, took that measurement and subtracted enough to end up with 22 inches. After I had made my mark, I used a hand hacksaw to make my cut.

There are a couple of ways to help you make a square cut: One is to use a tube cutter and mark the barrel, just as if you were going to cut some copper pipe. Clamp it on, rotate, and use the scored mark of the cutter for a guide.

Another way is to take some tape and wrap the barrel making sure the wrap is even and meets up perfectly. Line your saw up with the edge of the tape and start cutting. After you cut the barrel,

you can use a file to even up the cut and clean up the edge.

THE CROWN IS KING

All the work to stiffen the barrel will be worthless if we do not have a good crown on it. A well-formed crown allows the gas to vent evenly from the barrel.

I used Brownell's crowning kit, which can be mounted in a power drill. The first part is the 90-degree cutter and pilot to ensure the face is square. The second part is an 11-degree cutter to give the barrel its crown.

You want to sink the cutter only about one-third the thickness of the barrel. To finish off the barrel, take a file and gently break the sharp edge on the outside of the barrel and use the tang of the file to remove any burrs on the inside lip of the barrel.

TAKING STOCK

For this article, I built three different platforms using three different stocks: ATI, Archangel and Bluegrass Gunstock.

ATI's stock is a straightforward Monte Carlo style hunting stock, the trimmest of the three. ATI makes the stock out of a Dupont extreme temperature glass reinforced polymer and is a straight drop-in stock that uses the Mosin's original box magazine. It is very easy to use and comes with a recoil pad pre-installed.

Archangel's stock for the Mosin



Left is the original crown on a new project rifle. The center is a barrel that has just been cut and the far right is a barrel that has been cut and crowned with a 45-degree crowning tool. When I was done I didn't have a round cutter so I simply broke the outside edges with a Swiss fine cut file.



The Archangel stock had to be slightly relieved to allow the bolt to seat. I roughed out the cut with my Dremel. I took a small block of wood and wrapped it in sandpaper to finish it.



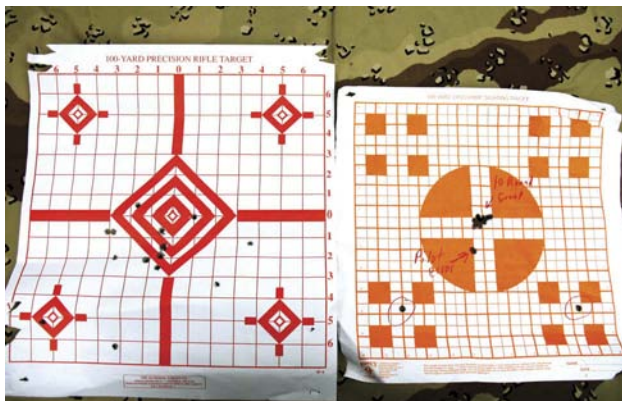
The Timney trigger replaces the original in no time at all with just one screw and a pin. The Timney trigger made a world of difference.



The Timney trigger comes with an easier-to-operate safety and all three stocks, the ATI, Archangel and Bluegrass have all made allowances for the safety.



Here is a close-up look at the front rail on Bluegrass' tactical stock.



On the left is the result at 100 yards with a scope on the original Mosin-Nagant rifle, and on the right is at 100 yards after the barrel was cut and the rifle was put into the Bluegrass stock with a Timney trigger.



Left to right is the Rock Solid Industries M24 Rail uncoated, a coated M24 and their scout rail.



Crowning kit from Brownell's. On the left is the 90-degree cutter, in the center is the 45-degree cutter and on the right is the 11-degree cutter.



Notice the difference in the finish on the rear of the receiver. The top one is rough and shows tooling chatter. The bottom one is smooth. These two serve as a good example as to the range of quality that is available.



A number of companies make hunting ammo for the Mosin. On the right is standard military surplus and on the left is 150-grain Privi Partizan Soft Point Boat Tail.



Top left to right: the Bluegrass tear drop bolt handle; Rock Solid Industries round bolt handle; and a bolt handle end from Bluegrass with their other offerings below.

WHICH MODEL?

For a rebuild, a Model 1891/30 is perfect.

is a tactical bench shooter's design. The stock is made from carbon-fiber reinforced polymer. I just dropped the action in with a couple of minor adjustments. I had to drill a hole for the forearm sling swivel, and I had to cut a relief for the bolt handle because I used the Rock Solid Industries bolt.

The main feature of the Archangel stock is that it takes removable magazines, which are available in either 5- or 10-round versions. Due to the interrupter on the Mosin action, you have to insert the magazines with the bolt closed and then give it a good slap to seat the first round. Initially, the magazine gave me a few feeding problems, but it functions better now after a break-in period.

I used the Bluegrass Tactical Stock made from DuraCoated maple. I wanted it to be set up for bench shooting, so I splurged and got some of the extras. Base price for the Tactical model is only \$98, and you add your features from there. Only a little fitting work had to be done with a small chisel and if they DuraCoat it, you will have to clean the holes out. Bluegrass Stocks use the original box magazine and feature a cross grain pistol grip for added strength. In the end, personally I think you get more than your money's worth with the Bluegrass Stock.

TRIGGERS AND BOLTS

The original trigger leaves much to be desired, with a lot of travel and a heavy pull. Trigger jobs are not something to be done by the inexperienced, so by all means take it to a skilled gunsmith. Or you can do what I did and replace your trigger with a



Left to right: The Archangel Mosin Nagant stock, Bluegrass's Bench Model and the ATI Mosin stock waiting for its action.

Timney trigger. Using a Timney is straightforward, and I always have great results with them.

If you are going to mount a scope on your Mosin, you are going to want to bend the bolt. ATI makes a do-it-yourself kit that is easy enough to do with a few simple hand tools. The only required tool a person does not normally have is a tap handle. For the most part, it requires a hacksaw, bench grinder, hand drill and vise.

Another route is to get a bent bolt from either Bluegrass or Rock Solid Industries. If you want to keep all your numbers matching, you can even ask to send in your bolt sleeve to get it done. I also bought a firing pin spring from www.Socamo.com.

THE FINAL ANALYSIS

The end results were better than just having an accurate rifle that I could shoot inexpensively. My rebuilt Mosin was a rifle that I had a hand in building and that I could use for a number of things, from hunting to plinking.

My groupings tightened up, and the Timney trigger made a huge difference. As for the stocks, all of them lessened the

effects of the recoil and provided a solid platform. You would not even guess you were shooting a Mosin if you did not already know.

Shortening the barrel also helped to tighten the groups without a huge loss of velocity. However, the muzzle report increased noticeably.

You have to like it when you get a chance to get in there, get your hands a little dirty, and come out with something of your own. Most of the work required only basic tools. Besides the parts themselves, one stop at Brownell's will get you the rest of the supplies.

The rebuilt Nagant is a great shooter, and when you are finished, people will be hard-pressed to guess that it started out as a \$139 rifle. **IMS**

Abe Elias is an outdoor writer and a custom knife maker (Diving Sparrow Knife Works) and has contract knife designs with several major companies.



BAYONETS, NOT DESIGNED AS CUTTING TOOLS, WERE OFTEN A SOLDIER'S LAST LINE OF DEFENSE

MORE TO THE POINT

052

■ Text and Photos by Jim Thompson

At a family picnic in the 1950s, veterans gathered 'round and swapped tales. There was one who'd been with Second Armored Division since the early

days in North Africa, another with the 101st and several others from deployed National Guard outfits.

One said: "Ya know, I could never keep my bayonet sharpened!"

Another, my uncle Perry, 101st Airborne, who'd jumped

into Holland, sneered. He didn't like that fellow much, anyway.

"Why would you even try? If they meant for it to be a knife, they'd have issued you a sharpening stone and called it a 'knife.' It's for poking stuff and puncturing people!"

He wasn't merely correct. In a nutshell, he'd summed up a couple of centuries of military technology and history.

Because of other changes — mostly advances in cartridges, firearms, tactics and the overall need to lighten infantry's load — bayonets have been slowly evolving into smaller, more versatile devices. A look at some of the U.S. military issue bayonets of the last 70 years bears this out.



“BAYONETS ARE FINALLY BECOMING MUCH MORE VERSATILE.”

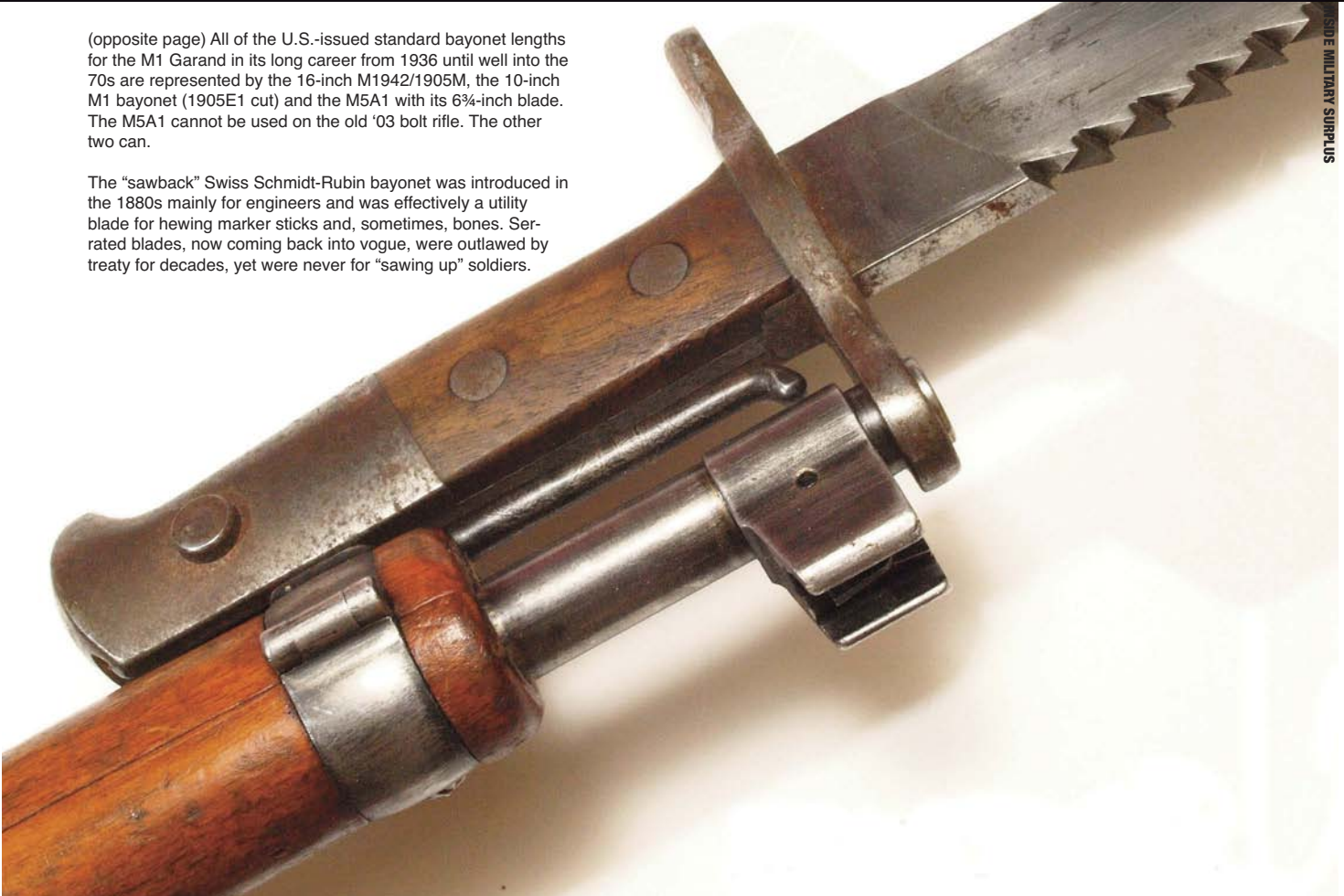


PHOTO COURTESY OF INLAND MANUFACTURING


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(opposite page) All of the U.S.-issued standard bayonet lengths for the M1 Garand in its long career from 1936 until well into the 70s are represented by the 16-inch M1942/1905M, the 10-inch M1 bayonet (1905E1 cut) and the M5A1 with its 6¾-inch blade. The M5A1 cannot be used on the old '03 bolt rifle. The other two can.

The “sawback” Swiss Schmidt-Rubin bayonet was introduced in the 1880s mainly for engineers and was effectively a utility blade for hewing marker sticks and, sometimes, bones. Serrated blades, now coming back into vogue, were outlawed by treaty for decades, yet were never for “sawing up” soldiers.



INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



Knife and sword bayonets—those with flat blades, generally—require some kind of lug to lock and align. The most common of these is the long lug Mauser, this one on a Czech-produced G.24(t) Mauser VZ24 Model of 1898 variant.

“ONE OF THE ORIGINAL PURPOSES OF THE BAYONET WAS TO REPEL HEAVY CAVALRY, AS THE ANCIENT PIKE...HAD DONE FOR CENTURIES.”

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1. M4 BAYONET

The M4 bayonet for the .30-caliber M1 Carbine was introduced not long before the end of World War II, albeit very, very few M1 Carbines ever encountered the bayonets during World War II. Indeed, my uncle, Perry Scott, an N.C.O. with 101st Airborne, noted that many of his personnel had the lugs on their M1A1's before the end, but he never saw an actual carbine bayonet until after the war.

The M4 Carbine bayonet with

a 6¾-inch blade, was directly derived from the M3 fighting/trench knife. The self-sharpening sheath was usable with both and with almost all U.S. bayonets from the M1 of 1942 to the very last of the M7's, only about a decade ago.

2. M7 BAYONET

The M7 bayonet of the 1970s is still in current issue. With its 6¾-inch blade, the M7 bayonet-knife is used as a bayonet on the M-16 series rifle and M4A1 car-

bine and as a hand weapon, fighting knife.

The M7 entered service in 1964 when the M-16 was phased in as the U.S. military service rifle.

The M7 fits the M16, M4, other Armalite-based rifles, to include the Israeli Galil and some versions of the Finnish Valmet for export. Combat shotguns have been fitted with this bayonet as well. The NSN for the M7 bayonet is 1095-00-073-9238.

The M7 blade and hilt are virtually identical to the M4 bayo-

HEAT TREATMENT AND HARDNESS

Much of the real issue with bayonets has to do with heat treatment, especially of longer blades. Run comparatively soft, about 22 on the Rockwell "C" scale, bayonets were handy and durable, but not much use for cutting meat or even wood, save by sheer arm power.

Run 40 or higher, an edge could be developed and even maintained, but blades much longer than about 8 inches became very breakable, and indeed, the U.S. Model of 1942 16-inch steel bayonet blades broke regularly in simple bayonet drill, stateside. Most were withdrawn, cut to 10-inch blades, and annealed to a more durable status, roughly approximating the M1 bayonets whose manufacture began slightly later.

Interestingly, in Europe, differential hardening had been tried by the Swiss and a few others, and while it was found successful, it was also expensive and never used until recently on "mass issue" rifle bayonet blades.



Japanese World War II Type 99 rifle with its 15 3/4-inch blade Type 30 bayonet and scabbard. This is an intact rig from 1940, and the leather belt frog is also original.



Some armies, in order to use up huge stocks of old bayonets, had new rifles appended with "adapters." This is an Argentine M98 M1909 with its "drop down" adapter in place.



The U.S. M9 bayonet is a direct copy of the Kalashnikov Second Type (improved) bayonet and, in fact, the first working specimen was made from a modified AK bayonet. (photo courtesy curiosandrelics.com)

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



Submachine guns like this ca.1940 British Lanchester, a copy of the German MP.28, mounted the full-length S.M.L.E. bayonet, but were not a good leverage platform for real use of the bayonet.



Some folding bayonets were “spike” or “needle” type, such as this Soviet Model 44 carbine. The obvious idea was that you’d never lose your bayonet.

net with the Korean War era plastic grips for the M1 Carbine, except that the M7 has a much larger muzzle ring. The M7 has the same two-lever locking mechanism as the M4 that connects to a lug on the M16 barrel.

3. M9 BAYONET

The M9 was directly derived from an AKM Type I bayonet, developed by Charles A. “Mickey” Finn of Qual-A-Tech R&D Company ca.1986. This unit is a foot long overall with a 7-inch blade and is slowly taking the place of the M7, which is still in issue.

This would’ve all seemed absurd to our forebears, who’d have questioned immediately the standard issue 14.5-inch barreled (33 inches overall, stock extended) M4, let alone its stubby bayonet.

“For close-in fighting,” the theory went, “one needs a longer rifle and a longer bayonet, too.”

A century ago, that would’ve been something like

a Gewehr 98 Mauser service rifle (length: 49.2 inches), to which would be attached the Seitengewehr 98/05 with its 14.5 inch blade – for roughly 4½ feet total length.

NOW MORE VERSATILE

Bayonets are finally becoming much more versatile. Some of the U.S. M9 bayonets are now being serrated and slot cut for wire cutter applications in concert with specialized scabbards. Differential heat treatment has become more common as the blades became shorter, meaning they have much higher tensile strength. A bayonet still isn’t a knife — but most of them can now actually be used to cut things. **IMS**

Jim Thompson is a lifelong student of military arms who has been writing books and articles for more than 30 years.

056

INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



The folding spike bayonet of the Chinese issue, Vietnam era Type 56 Second Model (AKM) is very similar to the spike bayonets of generations earlier.

The rather rare Beretta-produced 6.5mm “Type I” rifle is here accompanied by a Type 30 bayonet whose only marking is a letter “B,” suggesting — but not proving — that the accessory might have been produced by the Gardone Val Trompia firm.



In the '80s and early '90s, many rifles were fired, with and without bayonets, to determine if the bayonets negatively impacted accuracy. Results were mixed.



Two Mausers, a Spanish Air Force M44 on the left, a Brazilian M1908 on the right, both Model of 1898 rifles, were photographed stuck in the ground with their F.N. export bayonets (15 inches) of the inter-war period.



The French MAS 36/51 uses a bayonet that is stored in the stock front and is withdrawn and snapped into place when needed.



A late Type I AKM Kalashnikov bayonet fitted for the wire cutter scabbard and featuring serrated spine. The later Type II added metal reinforcement on the lug end to avoid cracking from soldiers using their blades as substitute hammers. It was from this general type that the current U.S. M9 bayonet was derived.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF THE BAYONET

One of the original purposes of the bayonet was to repel heavy cavalry as the ancient pike and various other spear-like weapons had done for centuries. Simply standing, digging the butt heel of a musket into the ground and displaying sharp, narrow steel blades likely discouraged many a quickly planned horse charge.

Invariably, European sources trace the rifle-mounted blades and families of special daggers to Bayonne, France, seeming often to suggest that the term described the origin or type of blade, rather than the attachment to a long gun.

Some sources surmise that the mounted blade was also a hunter's failsafe for game that could be killed with a handy knife, and also a defensive weapon in case rather surly boars or other prey decided to counterattack. Hard documentation on this is thin, but there is considerable anecdotal evidence.

What's certain is that the old plug bayonet — a cork or soft wood mount smacked into the muzzle — was in use long before rifling was common, and that some blade-affixed handguns were produced before the easily mounted and dismounted bayonet became fairly standard.

Even before 1700, non-obstructing socket-mount bayonets, which allowed the musket bore to remain open and free, were coming into use.

Almost all of these early bayonets used triangular, tubular or cruciform blades, and any sharpening or heat treating was minimal, generally confined to the penetrating end.

By the 19th Century, sword bayonets were being introduced, some attached with spring-locked sockets, some fitting into rectangular tabs. Most of these bore blades around 20 inches, a few as short as 15 inches. Even though they were not particularly hard — meaning, they tended not to hold an edge — recruits were taught they were still usable as swords.

Typically, weight was substantial, and overall length could reach 26 inches. The heat treat, if the blade were eventually successful, left the shaft quite soft, not really capable of holding an edge, or alternatively, ran hardness to 40+ on the Rockwell "C" scale, as with the U.S. M1942, and they generally broke in training or ordinary handling. Weights of 3 pounds and more with scabbard were very common.

While trowel and spade bayonets have been tried, over time, the "rod" and "blade" (sword or knife) bayonets have tended, in a wide variety of forms and styles, to be pro forma for at least 150 years.

As with much military gear, the tendency to wish for the bayonet to perform extra duty accounts for much of its evolution. Shape and size have changed repeatedly, but since the middle of the nineteenth century, sizes trend shorter.

Serrations ("saw blades") were advanced periodically, mainly to cut wood for engineering outfits and were used to configure bone markers, but were seen as "inhumane butchery" and banned by treaty for a time.



A U.S. M1 Garand with U.S.M.C. paraphernalia of the about 1943 and a M1905E1 (cut down M1905) bayonet.



THE M1903 SPRINGFIELD SEES ACTION THROUGHOUT THE 20TH CENTURY

THE UBIQUITOUS BOLT

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY LeRoy Thompson

When I first started buying guns during the 1960s, surplus M1903

Springfields were fairly common. Most of those I knew who owned a M1903 purchased it for shooting or hunting rather than collecting, and many “sporterized” them.

Only later did I learn that at

least a few M1903s Springfields, most often the M1903A3 version, were still serving in the U.S. armed forces.

A LONG HISTORY OF SERVICE

And that raises an important point about the '03 that is often forgotten. Adopted in 1903, it served through World War I and World War II and still saw service in Korea

and Vietnam as a sniping rifle. It also served on U.S. Navy ships through at least the 1960s and probably later on some ships.

The M1903 was not the first bolt action rifle adopted by U.S. armed forces. Previously, the Lee Model 1895 and Remington-Lee Model 1885 had served with the Navy and Marine Corps, and the Model 1892 Krag had served the U.S. Army. None had proven



The M1903 rifle was designed to be loaded quickly with a 5-round stripper clip.



View from the rear as the bolt of the '03 is operated. Note the safety lever, which is in the fire position to the left.

completely satisfactory. When U.S. troops encountered the M1893 Mauser in the hands of Spanish troops during the Span-Am War, it had proven quite superior.

In searching for a new rifle, the war department had certain requirements, including a higher velocity cartridge, a strong action to handle that cartridge, and an internal magazine that could be rap-

**“SO FAST AND
ACCURATE...
THE GERMANS
THOUGHT EACH
U.S. SOLDIER
HAD A MACHINE
GUN.”**

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



Three variations of the M1903 rifle: top, a Remington M1903 showing the simpler stock to ease production; middle, a Springfield of standard M1903 configuration; and bottom, an O3A3 World War II production rifle.

Top view of a Springfield Armory produced '03 showing the bolt open. Note the stripper clip guide atop the receiver and also that the magazine cutoff is in the "ON" position allowing rounds to be fed from the magazine.





Front sight of the M1903 rifle.

M1903 SPRINGFIELD SPECIFICATIONS

Action: Bolt
Caliber: .30-06 Springfield
Overall Length: 43.9 inches
Barrel Length: 24 inches
Weight: 8.7 pounds
Cartridge capacity: Five rounds
Sights: Flip-up Rear ('03), Aperture Rear (03A3), Barleycorn front

idly loaded from a stripper clip.

Developed for the new rifle was the .30-06 cartridge, which would prove to be one of the most popular rifle rounds of all time, one that was retained when the United States adopted the self-loading Garand rifle and was also used in U.S. medium machine guns until the adoption of 7.62x51mm NATO caliber M60 GPMG.

FAST AND ACCURATE

The M1903 is most often associated with its service during World War I, though in actuality more M1917 Enfield rifles were produced than M1903 Springfields. The M1917 was, however, a stopgap designed to equip the rapidly growing U.S. Army.

It was the '03 that developed a reputation for accuracy and speed of fire. So fast and accurately could U.S. troops use their '03 Springfields that, reportedly, in at least one battle the Germans thought each U.S. soldier had a machine gun.

Accurate fast fire from the '03 turned back many German attacks. Its accuracy had been proven before the war in match shooting, where it had consistently defeated competition from other countries armed with their service rifles. When the ordnance

department compared the accuracy of captured Mauser rifles with the '03 they found it delivered superior accuracy.

Returning U.S. veterans were impressed with the Springfield and wanted to own them, but surplus rifles were not sold off in mass. Instead, some were made available to competition shooters through gun clubs or at the National Matches at Camp Perry. Some of the surplus rifles were also used for hunting, where the accuracy and power of the .30-06 round proved invaluable.

Between the Wars, the '03 continued in service and saw action, especially with the U.S. Marines during the counter-insurgency wars in Panama, Haiti, Dominican Republic and elsewhere.

THE M1903 ENTERS WWII

Although the M1 Garand rifle was introduced in 1936, production of the '03 continued until 1938 at Springfield Armory. As World War II approached, it became apparent that enough M1 Garands would not be available to arm a greatly expanded Army.

As a result, M1903 production began in 1942 at Remington Arms and in 1943 at Smith-Corona. To meet demand, modifications to simplify production



View of the M1903A3 rear aperture sight.

were made, resulting in the M1903A3 rifle. Remington also produced the M1903A4 sniper version of the 03A3.

Although early battles of World War II were fought by U.S. troops armed with the M1903, the Garand replaced the Springfield with frontline units. The last 03A3s were produced in 1944. Still, at least some Springfields remained in service with these units, as a grenade launcher had not yet been developed for the Garand.

THE MAUSER INFLUENCE

Development of what would become the '03 rifle had begun in 1900 with a design that owed much to the M98 Mauser. It used two locking lugs at the front of the bolt plus an additional safety lug. It could be loaded with stripper clips and incorporated a magazine cutoff that allowed operation as a single shot while rounds in the magazine were held in reserve. Ammunition was a .30-caliber rimmed cartridge loaded with a round nose bullet.

After examining the prototype rifle, officers at Springfield Armory recommended that the magazine be designed to allow cartridges to be staggered so that it did not extend below the stock. Also, rimless cartridges were specified to allow easier loading from "clips" (actually chargers). The chargers/clips were designed to allow load-

ing from either the "top" or "bottom" of the charger to speed loading.

M1901 TESTED AND EVALUATED

Rifles incorporating changes were submitted and recommended for adoption as the "U.S. Magazine Rifle, Cal .30 Model of 1901." An interesting feature of the M1901 was a rod bayonet that was fitted into the front of the stock and held by a catch.

Manufacture of 5,000 M1901 rifles was approved. However, the chief of ordnance decided that a run of 100 model shop rifles should be produced first and evaluated prior to actual manufacture. In addition to allowing the rifle to be tested, these 100 rifles would be used to evaluate the rod bayonet, sling, bandoleers, cartridge belt, and stripper clips.

The rifles would have a 1:8 twist to stabilize the 220-grain bullet in the .30 cartridge. Versions were produced with barrels of 22, 24, 26 and 30 inches to determine if both a carbine and rifle should be adopted.

Officers from the cavalry, infantry and ordnance were selected to evaluate the rifle, with NCOs known for their shooting ability assisting with firing tests and demonstrations. After the initial firing tests, officers traveled among army posts to receive comments from active duty personnel about the rifle.

Among recommendations that emerged from the evaluations were that the 24-inch barrel be standardized so the rifle could serve with both infantry and cavalry. Additionally, it was suggested that the hand guard be extended to prevent troops from burning their hands and that the rear sight be moved further back and better secured.

Other changes included moving the mounting point for the front sling swivel 2 inches rearward; a bolt stop to prevent it slipping under the clip seat when open; and raising the bolt's safety lug, which

THE PEDERSON DEVICE

Another interesting variant of the '03 was the alteration of the rifle to take the Pederson Device, which allowed the rifle to operate as a semi-auto firing a pistol-type cartridge with an 80-grain bullet at 1,300 feet per second from a 40-round magazine atop the rifle.

Designed to give the firepower of a submachine gun during trench assaults, plans were made to equip the U.S. equivalent of German Storm Troops with rifles so equipped, but the War ended before Pederson Devices other than test examples arrived in France. Rifles altered to take the Pederson Device were designated the M1903 Mk I rifle and could still fire standard .30-06 ammunition.

**“ADOPTED IN 1903, IT
SERVED THROUGH WORLD
WAR I AND WORLD WAR II
AND STILL SAW SERVICE IN
KOREA AND VIETNAM AS A
SNIPING RIFLE.”**





At left, the original .30-03 round-nosed cartridge that was replaced by the .30-06 with Spitzer bullet at right. (top) A view of the M1903's flip-up rear sight. (above right) Close-up of the M1903A4 sniping rifle scope. (Martin Floyd).

required the receiver bridge being raised.

The rod bayonet was retained, but the diameter was increased for greater strength. With these changes, the rifle was adopted as the "United States Magazine Rifle, Model of 1903, Caliber .30."

THE M1903 EVOLVES

Development had continued as well on the cartridge for the '03. After the German and French Armies had adopted the Spitzer bullet for their rifles, in October 1906, a new cartridge firing a 150-grain Spitzer bullet was approved for the '03.

New production rifles were chambered for the new .30-06 round, and once all .30-03 ammunition was used up, rifles in that chambering were re-chambered for the .30-06 round. The flatter trajectory of the upgraded round also necessitated that a new rear sight be developed for the '03.

Another change was the elimination of the rod bayonet, which had proved unsatisfactory. A knife bayonet was adopted and rifles designed for the rod bayonet were altered to take it, while new production rifles were designed for the knife bayonet. By the 1912 fiscal year, cost of a 1903 rifle with bayonet

and "appendages" was \$14.61 (about \$345.60 in 2015 dollars).

Versions of the '03 were also developed in World War I for use in aerial combat (prior to development of the synchronizer allowing machine guns to be used), and with periscopes and hinged stocks that allowed the rifle to be fired from a trench without the soldier exposing himself to enemy fire.

During World War I, there were instances in which some '03 receivers burst. More care in the forging process and a change in heat treatment solved the problem. Generally, serial numbers under 780,000, and possibly 800,000, offer the possibility of failure and should not be shot.

Note that the designation "M1903A1" may be encountered, which refers to '03s with a pistol grip stock replacing the standard stock.

MORE MODIFICATION DURING WWII

When Remington began production of the M1903 at the beginning of WWII, some alterations were made to the design, including: stamped parts replacing some machined ones and using a less expensive stock without the finger grooves, as well as



Three primary long arms used by U.S. troops in World War I, left to right: Winchester M97 Trench shotgun, M1917 Enfield Rifle and M1903 Springfield Rifle. (NARA)

other steps to speed production. These were referred to as M1903 (Modified) rifles.

On February 25, 1942, a contract for production of '03 rifles also was granted to Smith-Corona. Then, in May 1942, production of the '03 (Modified) was approved at both Remington and Smith-Corona as the "U.S. Rifle Cal. .30, Model 1903A3." Among the features of the 03A3 was a rear sight that was much easier to use with precision.

Although versions of the '03 with an optical sight and suppresser had been tested during World War I, it was the World War II M1903A4 sniper rifle based on the 03A3 that is best known—29,964 were produced. The most widely used scope was the "M73B1 Telescopic Sight," a military version of the Weaver 330C scope of 2.2X.

Unfortunately, this scope had not been originally designed for military use and proved fragile in combat. The U.S.M.C. M1941 sniper rifle

proved far better. It used Springfield Armory receivers, star-gauged '03 barrels (indicating uniformity in rifling), full pistol grip stocks, handguards with a swell for scope mounting and a Unertl 8X scope.

The M1903 Springfield had a long-lasting, integral role in our military history. I recommend to readers who have not handled or fired the '03 to do so if you get the chance. **IMS**

Leroy Thompson is a longtime gun writer and an expert in VIP protection, hostage rescue and counterinsurgency.



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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

UPDATE YOUR M1 GARAND TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR BATTLE RIFLE

THE M1 AS A SHOOTER

■ Text and Photos by Jim Thompson

The old veterans had it right: The main reason the M1 Garand tended to dominate firefights was that even soldiers who had never been exposed to firearms quickly learned to shoot it and shoot it well.

The brilliantly designed rifle was machined and assembled very differently from any other design to emanate from the Springfield, Massachusetts, Armory and it was by far its most creative design.

Not only was it to introduce

semi-automatic fire to ordinary infantry long guns for the very first time, but its new cartridge, the .276 Pedersen Center Fire, was intended to become the accuracy standard of the world.

The new cartridge never saw service. Before the very first production M1 ever left the factory in 1932, U.S. Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur ordered the rifles delivered in the old Caliber .30 Model 1906 cartridge due to the massive extant ammunition stocks.

That was more than eight decades ago. Before the rifle left

production in the U.S. in 1956 and in Italy in the late 1970s, a great deal was learned about how to prolong the rifle's life, make it more reliable, retain its accuracy and make it easier to use.

Many of the old trouble-shooting instructions in the military manuals ended with, "Return weapon to armorer for replacement." Because it's no longer in the military, your rifle is no longer tax-supported, which makes you, financially, the "armorer." Here are some ideas on how to get the most out of your old battle rifle.



Business end of a late issue .308 competition M1 Garand, featuring the postwar "high hump" gas cylinder lock and the old-style "solid" gas cylinder lock screw.



The M1 Garand receiver must "show light" in the area under the receiver here. Attempts to "block off" this area only complicate bolt function and make removal of parts difficult.



Almost immediately after World War II, old square-cornered operating rods were ordered “safety relieved” and hemispherical cuts were added to prevent cracks, bends and breaks in operating rods.



Beretta M1 Garands are not only “real” M1s, but they are among the very latest and very best, and have the advantage of having never been to war.

“IT IS...NOT RECOMMENDED THAT OLD...OPERATING RODS BE USED ON RIFLES SUBJECTED TO HEAVY RECREATIONAL OR COMPETITIVE SHOOTING.”

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ALL ABOUT CLIPS

The most expensive part of the M1 Garand is the receiver, which is fairly close to invulnerable. That’s not so with the clips.

Just over a decade ago, some en bloc eight-round clips entered the country with heavy coats of some kind of enamel. They weren’t all American, but they were “issue.” The enamel was so thick it changed the external dimensions. Very difficult to insert, they often ejected early or not at all.

Those who bought these—they were very inexpensive—mostly figured out that, with the ultra-heavy finish removed, they worked fine. I tumbled mine in my case cleaner. The clips are all eight-

shots and work with all M1s, in all calibers.

Lately, though, factory new, commercially made monstrosities have entered the marketplace, and they have prompted troubleshooting charts to add the addendum when cartridges are ejected early to “discard defective clips.”

Even worse, these arrived at about the same time as clip latches whose dimensional and metallurgical qualities were way out of specification.

Some of the reproductions are quite good and, in fact, the clips I get from the CMP (Civilian Marksmanship Program) are new, but they perform about as well as G.I. units.

I was unaware of the substan-

dard clip latches until I had one that was too hard (about 45 on the Rockwell “C” scale) to break off. There are some solid reproductions around, but supplies of originals are drying up.

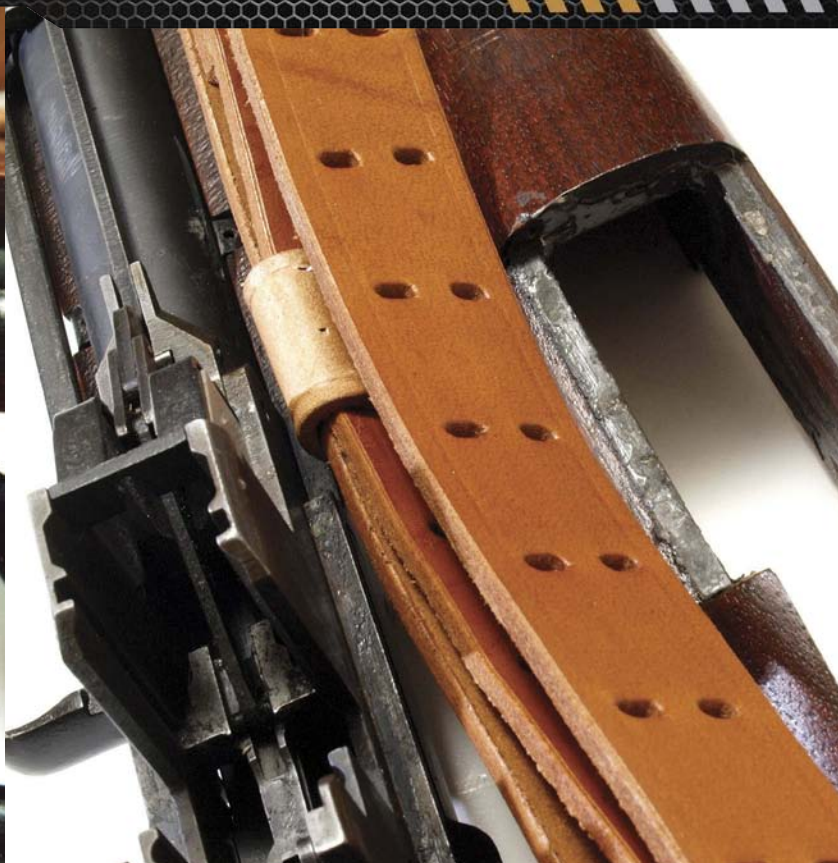
BARRELS

Next is the barrel. Lots of high quality replacement barrels are around, the best of which are civilian. The most accurate will always be in the newer, shorter cartridge, which, effective in 1956, replaced the .30.06 as U.S. infantry standard. That cartridge is called 7.62x51 NATO or .308 Winchester.

For more than 50 years, this very efficient-burning cartridge has proven itself the darling of



A late World War II M1 Garand purchased by a shooter was delivered with two operating rods: a "square" (flat-sided) "dash nine" original, and, below, a "safety cut" postwar D35382 replacement.



Neither glass nor filled epoxy bedding is invulnerable. This reinforced epoxy bedding has been filled and repaired and is drying. It took about 1,100 rounds before chipping occurred. Fiberglass holds up slightly better.

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This high-numbered Springfield Armory M1 Garand has just been graced with a new .308 heavy barrel. Also added is a bright aluminum magazine block to prevent accidental attempts to load .30-06 cartridges into the rifle.



Both the shorter .308 (7.62x51mm NATO) and the older .30 U.S. Model of 1906 cartridges use the same clips, though defective and inferior clips are causing massive problems throughout the Garand community.

GREASE IT

High temperature grease is the only usable lubricant for the major moving parts of the M1 Garand and, for that matter, most heavy caliber semi-automatics.

The old "Lubriplate" was designed for the Garand, but in the last half century, it's been discovered that wheel bearing greases have even better extreme temperature and stress responses and can be purchased at any auto parts store. Thin oils not only don't work, but they can damage the wood and will migrate away from key parts, performing no real function at all.



(top left) Pictured is a D 35382 6 SA operating rod at top, evincing insipient cracks. In the middle, a postwar 35382 "safety relieved" replacement. At the bottom, a 779072 RA "last issue" National Match item, made well after the M1 was out of production. (top right) Pictured is two wartime "uncut" operating rods, which are both quite uncommon. Original "dash one" units like the one at the top, in usable condition, are worth roughly half the price of a decent M1 rifle yet probably should not be used much on a "shooting" rifle. (above left) The gauges used for the Garand judge comparative barrel condition. The cartridge-shaped one at the top is for the muzzle and is usable on pretty much all .30-caliber bores. The chamber/throat gauge at the bottom is .30/06, and only for the Garand. (above right) Here we compare two M1s in .308/7.62x51. The upper unit is an Italian "Tipo 2" (type 2) format, some 12mm shorter than standard using an old .30 U.S.G.I. barrel shortened from the rear; and the bottom unit is a full-length rifle, externally identical to a G.I. rifle but, of course, glass bedded.

military match and high power contestants, shooting more accurately at all ranges than the cartridge it replaced in the M1. The half dozen or so 'smiths with whom I communicate regularly all mentioned they had not "match prepped" a .30/06 Garand in years.

Barrels are ubiquitous. Some shooters claim the slower 1 turn in 12-inch rifling rate is superior in both common calibers and at all ranges. Military specification M1 barrels inherited their 1 turn in 10-inch twist rate from the Springfield '03, which was so arrayed because of the 200-plus grain bullets deployed by the original .30/03 cartridge.

The best barrels are probably the heavies, but they're brutal to install, requiring that hand guards

be reduced to almost eggshell thickness. They are more rigid and, of course, absorb heat more uniformly.

Most 'smiths agree: Any modern commercial barrel will outperform an old G.I. unit, and the best of them are much better.

It's prudent to use muzzle and throat gauges on an M1 barrel before presuming it's worn out. Most 'smiths want at least \$100 to fit and chamber a new barrel and the tubes run \$175 and up.

The heavies and a lot of other modifications are forbidden in the John C. Garand service rifle matches, by the way, as is the newer, more efficient cartridge. Some local clubs shoot a broader "Garand Match," and any caliber may be employed.

OPERATING RODS

The next most expensive metal part is the operating rod. Postwar rods with the safety relief cut are by far the safest and sturdiest, and the very last—numbered 779072—were made to very high standards, but most important are at least three years newer than those numbered 6535382. They include the "National Match" operating rods.

Soon, because supplies of originals are drying up, high quality reproductions for shooters will hit the market. They won't be cheap, and they'll be marked in such a manner that it will be difficult for fakers to doctor the numbers and misrepresent them as vintage IHC, SA, Beretta, Breda or H&R parts.

Still, the expertise and technol-



Today's best M1s are in .308/7.62x51mm, far closer to the .276 Pedersen for which the rifle was designed. The unit on the right is about 12mm shorter, an Italian-format "Tipo 2" conceived long after the Garand was out of U.S. production.

LEARN IT BEFORE YOU LOAD IT

3 Ways To Build Your Knowledge

For the owner of a credible M1 Garand, the first thing to do is delve into the relevant literature.

1 In particular, a very late issue military manual is handy, especially for the trouble-shooting charts and guides presented therein. U.S. Army Technical Manual TM-9-1005-222-35, in a 1966 or later version, is one of the best.

The industrial histories aren't much use for shooters. Some data—the part numbers of later parts, for example—are useful for guiding the practical owner to parts less likely to be worn out and the serial number information is interesting.

2 Practical texts, such as the NRA's American Rifleman reprint "The M1 Rifle: Handling, Shooting and Accurizing the First Gas Operated U.S. Service Rifle" (1985 revision), teach the concepts behind reliability and accuracy.

Collectors dislike this text because it begins with degreasing and sanding a G.I. stock, but it is the ideas behind firm bedding, dead tight gas cylinders (splines pinched in with hammer and punch) and setting up a rifle for trouble-free accuracy that spells out what can be done.

3 "The Complete M1 Garand" (1998) (one of my books) covers the match/competition/accuracy information from page 53 to 74, from a wide consensus of 'smiths and U.S. Army manuals.

This is "do-it-yourself" information.

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ogy exists to restore and re-curve operating rods, even welding tabs to optimum measurement. Columbus Machine Works, Inc., out of Columbus, Ohio, does this work on a regular basis and has done it for a very long time. There are others.

It is especially not recommended that old, wartime and pre-war operating rods be used on rifles subjected to heavy recreational or competitive shooting. One can argue about cracks and breakage, but bending and crystallization are common, and the old veteran rods are too valuable and comparatively weak to be subjected to a steady diet of full-power ammunition.

STOCKS

The butt stock of the Garand is expensive, too. If not tightly bedded, accuracy will suffer and cracking will result. The M1 should be sufficiently tight in its stock that, once the magazine housing is pulled, considerable effort, even to include serious hits with a wooden or rubber mallet, is required



The author's ca.1993 competition rifle, bedded firmly in a flame-grained Fajen walnut butt stock, its 3-hook, four-keeper B.A.R. sling rigged "sharp hooks out" for sustained offhand fire. This .308 has a heavy custom barrel.

to remove the receiver from the butt stock.

With an older stock, finishing the interior with many carefully applied and dried coats of polyurethane varnish can make this tight enough for functional purposes without going outside the rules of the John C. Garand match.

A new stock, especially a laminate, can be much tighter. Generally, tight is good. Loose is not only bad, but can be dangerous. Glass or epoxy bedding is better still, and in high power competition, is essential, as is free-floating and standoff relief of the hand guards and securing the upper ("front") hand guard to the barrel with RTV cement. These latter operations, if fully executed, are also not within John C. Garand match rules.

Glass and/or epoxy bedding are not "forever." They have to be repaired generally at about

the same interval one replaces a barrel. The job will often need to be re-done down to bare wood.

Military-marked wood of interest to collectors has great value to them but is often shrunken, oil-soaked and otherwise unacceptable for a recreational or competition shooter. It's too valuable to be used roughly and if it cracks, well, unlike an aftermarket unit, replacement is not so easy.

OTHER PARTS

When I shot Garands at long range—now more than a decade ago—I used intentional overloads to keep my bullets supersonic beyond about 800 meters and used a variable gas cylinder lock screw. I don't do long range stuff any more and have not even seen that lock screw since.

Some reproduction or new-made replacement parts for the

M1 are superb. Elevation pinions, National Match sight sets, springs and so on equal or exceed originals in quality.

STILL A FUN GUN

The M1 can still compete with the "black rifles" and even beat them at greater ranges, but it does require higher order of diligence in avoiding problems. The more modern Stoner designs will always be cheaper to shoot and require less stamina and, yes, they can sustain zero with fewer limitations than Mister Garand's superb combat rifle. The Garand, however, is still a lot of fun to shoot. **IMS**

Jim Thompson is a lifelong student of military arms who has been writing books and articles for more than 30 years.

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THE LEGENDARY LUGER



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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

A HANDGUN THAT LIVES UP TO THE MYSTIQUE

■ Text and Photos by Bob Campbell

It's been this way for many years. The word Luger has conjured up visions of the best-made, best-fitted and best-finished of all handguns. The pistol is intricately made, well designed, and completely breathtaking to use and fire.

Bold words? Surprising?

The Luger has been represented as a collector's item, an item to be hoarded rather than fired. This is unfortunate, as the pistol was designed to be used.

THE BORCHARDT CONNECTION

The Luger's lineage can be traced back to a pistol designed by Hugo Borchardt. The Borchardt pistol was a semi-automatic pistol featuring a unique and very strong toggle operating mechanism. The pistol featured a beautiful satin blue finish and, according to every report, only the best material.

At a time when the U.S. Colt .45 service revolver sold for about \$16, the Borchardt pistol retailed for \$30. With the consolidation of several German arms makers, the pistol was manufactured by the giant Deutsche Waffen und Munitionsfabriken (DWM) in Berlin.

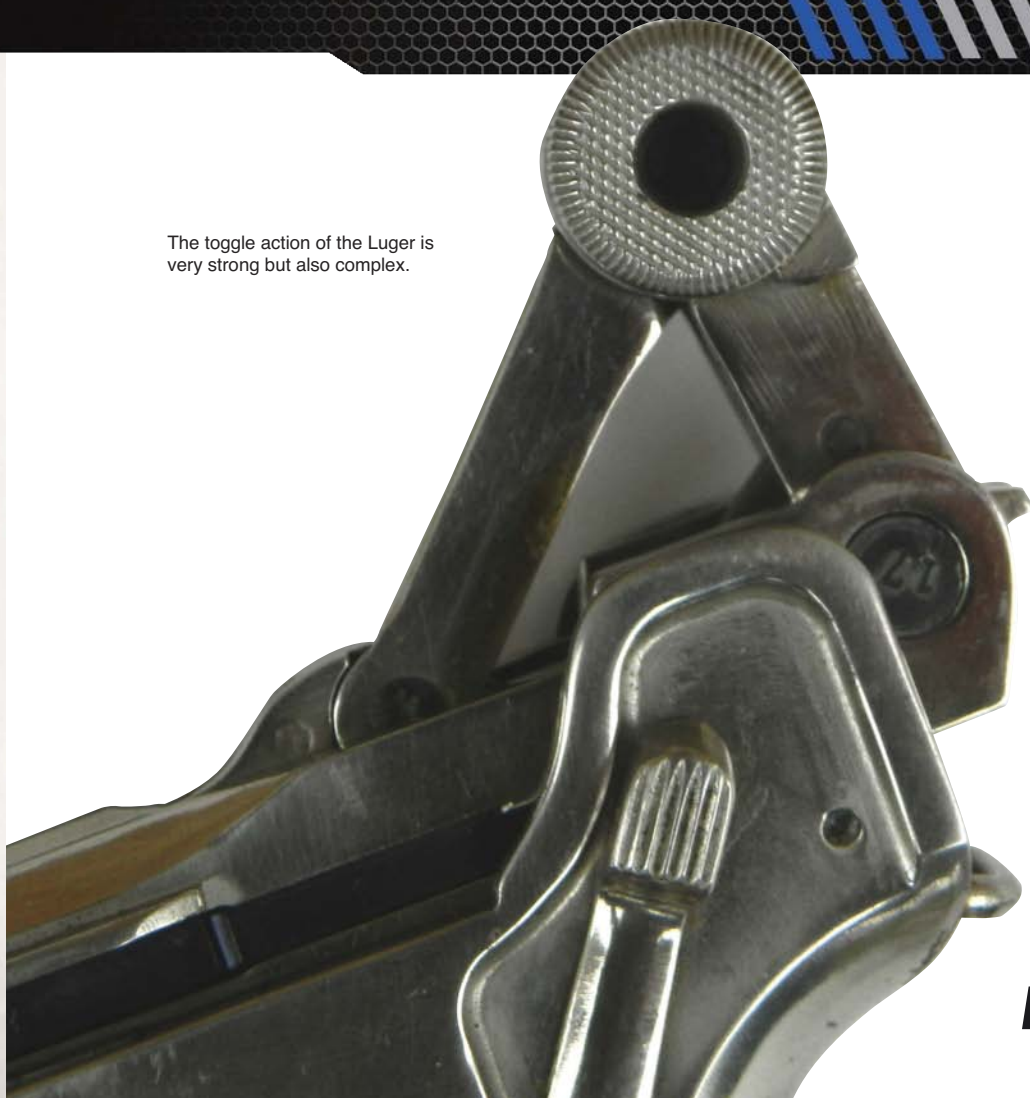
The Borchardt fired a high velocity bottleneck .30-caliber cartridge. The eight-shot detachable magazine was considered superior in practical and combat terms to the common fixed magazines found on the Mauser 1896 and other pistols. Supplied with a shoulder stock, the pistol was often described as a pistol/carbine, which was fitting.

LUGER MODIFIES THE DESIGN

One disadvantage of the Borchardt pistol was that it was large and bulky. DWM wished to make changes in the design to make the pistol more marketable. Georg



The toggle action of the Luger is very strong but also complex.



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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

Note the modern appearance of the Luger's takedown lever. The Luger set the pace for modern handguns for many years.



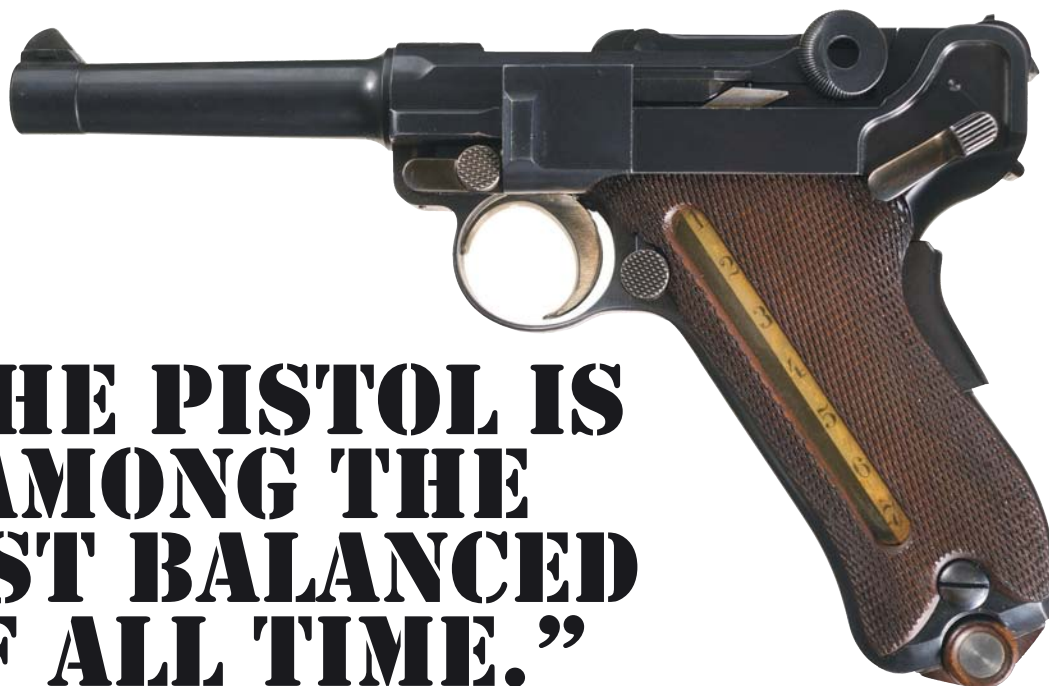


(above) The Luger's straight line feed allows excellent functional reliability.

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

**“THE PISTOL IS
AMONG THE
BEST BALANCED
OF ALL TIME.”**



ROCK ISLAND AUCTION PHOTO

THE LUGER ARTILLERY MODEL: WAS IT A PISTOL OR CARBINE?

The Luger long barrel or Artillery Model was produced during the first World War. This pistol featured a shoulder stock, 32-round snail drum magazine, and eight-inch barrel. This pistol filled the niche of a modern personal defense sidearm such as the FN 5.7mm.

The Artillery Luger had good practical accuracy and the ability to be easily stowed in an aircraft, boat or armored vehicle. The pistol is more significant in its romance than in the numbers manufactured. It was among the last of the shoulder stocked pistols to be used in combat.

Luger was hired to modify the design into a pistol more likely to generate military sales.

Luger kept the original action but shortened and lightened the pistol in significant ways. The barrel was shortened, although the thin profile was retained.

Among the most significant changes was a new grip profile. The Borchardt pistol featured a grip that protruded practically straight out of the receiver. A large and bulky housing on the rear of the receiver held the recoil spring. Luger changed the grip profile into a handle that angled from the receiver, thereby producing one of the most comfortable grips ever invented and one that has been praised for a nearly perfect handfit for more than 100 years.

The bulky recoil spring was deleted and moved to the grip frame in a more compact arrangement. Significant detail changes in the ejector and extractor and trigger housing were made, and a grip safety was added. This safety prevented the pistol from firing unless it was completely depressed.

The Luger was lightened to about 30 ounces compared to 40 ounces for the Borchardt design, and the barrel was standardized at 4 inches rather than the 7 inches of the Borchardt. The pistol was produced by the DWM and were so marked.

1900 and 1901 were very successful years for the new Luger pistol. Not only did the Swiss purchase 3,000 of the new handguns, but the U.S. Army purchased 1,000 for test and evaluation. A dozen or so nations tested the Luger, with small orders for special purposes the norm.

The cavalry was still a very important part of the armed forces, and the advantage of a self loading handgun that was relatively quick to reload was obvious. The Swiss issued their handguns to mounted units and in America the cavalry was interested in this modern pistol.

THE 9MM LUGER IS BORN

The first Lugers were chambered in the short 7.65mm Parabellum cartridge that was much less powerful than the original Borchardt round.

That changed around 1902, just before the adoption of the 1904 Naval Model. The 7.65mm Luger, known in the United States as the .30 caliber Luger, was replaced by the 9mm Luger.

The new cartridge had the same case length, which simplified the pistol's redesign. The bottleneck was eliminated. The 9mm Luger became the most widely used military cartridge of all time.

During this time, the grip safety was omitted and in 1906, the flat spring was replaced with a coil spring, an advancement that added to the longevity of the Luger.

LUGERS SEE HIGH DEMAND

The adoption of the Luger by the German Army in 1908 brought about both challenges and increased prestige. DWM could not keep pace with production in their lone factory, so the Luger was licensed for production to the Erfurt Arsenal.

A new means of serializing the pistols began. It was decided to stop all serial numbering at 9,999. After this series, the serial number would bear an alphabetical numeration as well: A, B, C and so on. Most of the Lugers produced for the military have the arsenal stamp and crown and also the acceptance date stamped on the receiver ring.

THE LUGER BETWEEN WARS

After World War I, there were great changes in Germany. The Treaty of Versailles among other things addressed the type of handguns Germany could manufacture. Calibers above 8mm or barrels longer than 3 15/16 inches were prohibited.

It was not a significant problem to produce Lugers with this slightly shorter barrel and to chamber the barrel for the original .30 Luger cartridge. These pistols were produced primarily for export outside Germany. The original 9mm was issued to the new smaller army.

The Germans were already ignoring the Versailles treaty. At this point, the subject of Luger production and manufacture is quite confusing to many of us, and volumes have been written on the subject.

THE LUGER IN WWII

DWM became part of a giant conglomerate that included Mauser. Mauser produced Luger pistols from 1930 to 1942. The company Kreighoff manufactured Lugers for the Luftwaffe, largely due to in-

fluence with Hermann Goering.

During this period, a relatively complex code system was initiated, largely to confuse the Allies—not yet enemies but potential problems even in 1935. An example is that Mauser was given the code “S/42” and the K or G nomination might mean 1934 or 1935. The new numbers were still used until 1942, when production of the Luger halted.

The Luger continued to be an important pistol until the end of the war. The Luger was officially replaced by the Walther P 38 in 1938 but the Luger was produced until the P 38 reached full production capacity.

After the war, there were reports of Lugers manufactured or rather put together from parts by the French in 1945 and 1946. Some of these do not wear official markings. And that was the end of the story for the original Luger.

There are any number of rare

and interesting variations on the Luger. Covering a portion of them would take a volume. Today, the collecting of Lugers is a respectable pastime, although an expensive one. Even “shooters” in good condition demand a \$1,000 or more.

THE LUGER AS A SHOOTER

The Luger is a handgun well worth shooting. After all, the pistol would not have survived as long as it did if it did not have pleasant shooting characteristics.

When holding the Luger, the first impression is of balance. The pistol is among the best balanced of all time. The handle sets at a 110-degree angle to the receiver, practically perfect. Trigger reach is quite good for even those with short fingers and small hands.

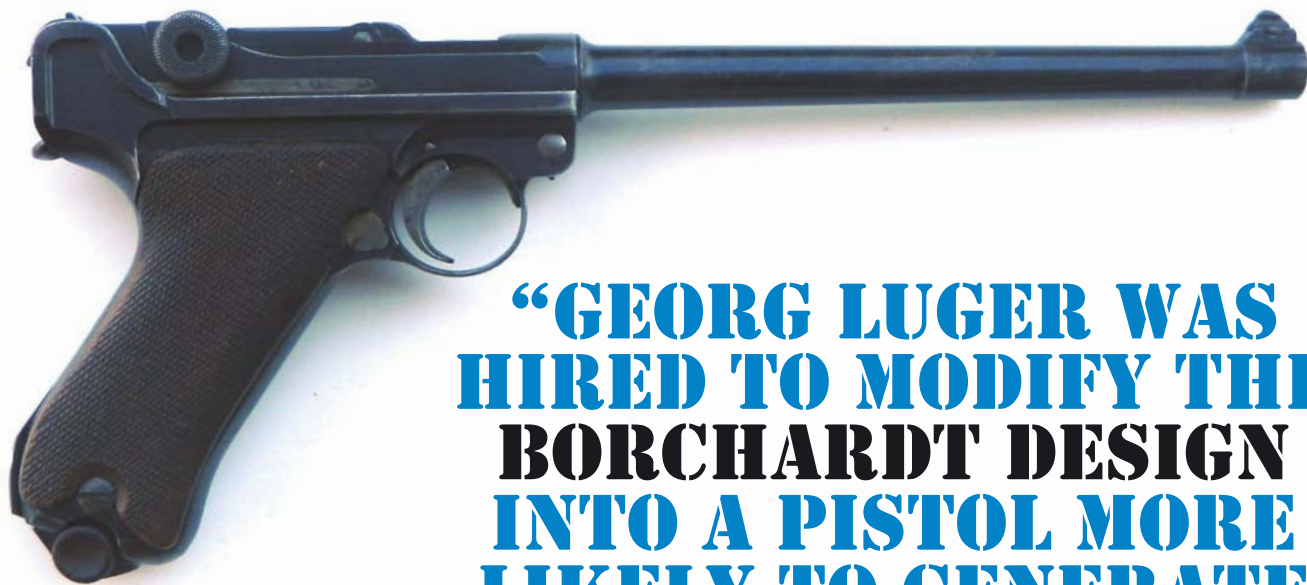
The toggle action requires some effort to actuate but nothing the average adult cannot handle.

The sights are small, but precise when lined up properly. The trigger action is different from most but crisp and usable.

One personal Luger is a 1923 commercial in 7.65mm. I was able to obtain a number of modern loads produced by Fiocchi ammunition. It is interesting to note that Fiocchi produces both the original full metal jacket bullet and a soft point copy of the original “Manstopper” loading.

I think that one of the reasons the Luger has been given an unearned reputation for spotty reliability is poor or underpowered ammunition. The Luger demands good, full-power ammunition. I have fired many Lugers and most will handle practically any modern JHP bullet in 9mm.

All of my .30 Luger pistols have been reliable. This pistol is no exception. However, the original magazine was weak and sometimes failed to feed the last



“GEORG LUGER WAS HIRED TO MODIFY THE BORCHARDT DESIGN INTO A PISTOL MORE LIKELY TO GENERATE MILITARY SALES.”

COLLECTOR'S TIPS

SOME NOTED LUGER COLLECTIBLES

Take care in purchasing any supposed rarity before you lay out a considerable investment. I will pick some of the plums.

1 Double-date Lugers

First, the Lugers reissued to the new smaller Germany Army were mostly ex-service 9mm hand-guns. The original issue mark was retained and the new mark not superimposed but rather stamped near it. These double-date Lugers were often issued to the police.

2 The Model 1923 commercial

This Luger was supplied with the 98mm barrel in .30 Luger. Imported by Stoeger in the United States, I have often heard these commercial models referred to as the Stoeger Luger.

3 Simson Lugers

In 1922, the company Simson and Company of Suhl was given the contract to supply Luger pistols to the new German Army. Around this time there was much grinding away of original markings. This is a confusing era and one that is fertile ground for a collector. Most of the affordable Luger "shooters" are from this era.



Parts are available from Brownells to keep the Luger in top shape.

BIRTH OF A GUN

Quick Facts

HUGO BORCHARDT This German engineer designed a semi-auto pistol that had a satin blue finish. It retailed for \$30.

GEORG LUGER The Borchardt pistol was large and bulky, so Deutsche Waffen und Munitionsfabriken (DWM), which manufactured the pistol, hired Georg Luger to modify the design.

round. I purchased a magazine at the gun show—a modern type—and it broke at the first range outing. Next, I obtained a magazine from Mec Gar. This cured my feed reliability problems. This Luger has fired several hundred of the Fiocchi loads without a malfunction.

Though I have other modern handguns for personal defense and small game, the Luger would prove formidable in this role. As for accuracy, the small sights and my eyes—well past the half century mark—are a limiting factor. I feel the pistol is a better shooter than I, but just the same, the piece has grouped five shots into 2 inches at 25 yards on several occasions.

Very few pistols of the era were as accurate as the Luger. The .30 Luger is very pleasant to fire, accurate, flat shooting, mild in recoil and with significant muzzle blast even with hearing protection. The cartridge averages nearly 1,200 fps. In fast shooting at close range, the natural feel and point of the Luger are an advantage.



Luger holsters are a study in themselves. This holster is original but someone carved his initials into the flap.

The Luger is a fascinating handgun. I am repeating myself over and over concerning these handguns and quite a few other desirable pieces. So, let's finish this way: Get one while they are affordable.

IMS

Bob Campbell is an outdoor writer specializing in firearms and self defense.

Ammunition must be powerful enough to cycle the action or short cycles can be common.



KEY NUMBERS

30 VS. 40 In ounces, the weight of the Luger compared to the heavier Borchardt design

4 VS. 7 In inches, the standardized length of the Luger compared to the longer Borchardt

3,000 The number of Lugers the Swiss purchased

1,000 The number the U.S. Army purchased 1,000 for test and evaluation

12 The approximate number of other nations that tested the Luger

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



This Artillery Luger, when fitted with its shoulder stock, could be used as pistol caliber carbine.

ROCK ISLAND AUCTION PHOTO

GET READY TO TAKE THIS DOWN

The takedown procedure of the Luger pistol was ahead of its time. There are handguns in use today that have shadows of this influence.

- 1** To disassemble the Luger, first triple check to be certain the handgun is not loaded.
- 2** Next, press the barrel to the rear slightly. This allows the takedown lever to be rotated 90 degrees downward. The locking plate will be released to fall off. You press the barrel forward and this assembly comes off of the frame.
- 3** To separate the toggle and the breech block, push out the connecting pin.
- 4** When reassembling, be certain that the coupling link does not hang into the magazine well, but drops behind it in line with link lever.

ROCKING THE



SKS

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BEST UPGRADES FOR THE ULTIMATE IN PERFORMANCE

■ Text and Photos by Abe Elias

There are many different surplus rifles available today, but few have the place among shooting enthusiasts like the Simonov SKS.

The SKS is a modern semi-automatic rifle that is fairly inexpensive and, best of all, cheap to shoot. Due to the popularity and just sheer numbers of SKSs out there, a number of companies have come up with upgrades for the rifle.

These various upgrades allow the shooter to get more out of the platform. Upgrades range from optics mounts to stock systems. The variety of upgrades provides a

number of choices. We can create a tactical platform or fix it up to be that trusty deer rifle we need each fall. I have put together just a small sampling of what is out there.

THE HISTORY

The full name of the Simonov SKS 45 is the Samozaryadnyj Karabin sistemi Siminova, a name I don't want to type often and one I hope I never have to pronounce.

The Soviet Union was looking for a self-loading rifle, so the famous arms designer Simonov put forth the SKS design. On the drawing board in 1943, the SKS was not into full production until

1949. The SKS was the first rifle to use the 7.62 x 39 cartridge.

It is gas operated and uses a short piston system. It has a box magazine that holds 10 rounds, which can be loaded one round at a time or with a stripper clip.

A number of countries put the SKS into production such as Russia, Yugoslavia and China. It is estimated that more than 70 million were made from 1946 into the '60s and many are still in use in world conflicts to this day.

Upon the advent of the AK47, the SKS was considered obsolete, but saw extensive service with the Chinese army.



This is the Brass Stack See Thru Scout Scope mount installed on an SKS with a red dot sight.
(Brass Stacker photo)

“THE SKS IS A MODERN SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE THAT IS FAIRLY INEXPENSIVE AND, BEST OF ALL, CHEAP TO SHOOT.”



The Archangel AASKS stock is very straightforward and only has a few parts to it. Here you have the main body, the fore-arm guard, the hand guard ferrule and pins, as well as the trigger guard spring.

A GOOD STOCK IS YOUR FOUNDATION

The original stock is very serviceable, and many owners use the SKS with the original stock on it. There are two types of original stocks: solid wooden stocks or a laminate version. The laminate version seems to be the more desirable.

Whichever one you have, there are still upgrades you can perform and keep the original stock on your rifle. For those who want to lighten the rifle a bit or give themselves access to more options, there are some aftermarket stocks to look at.

I chose two of the more popular stocks out there: the ATI SKS Strike Force and the Archangel AASKS.

ARCHANGEL AASKS

Archangel has a proven track record of making quality stocks for a number of rifles, so I was anxious to try their AASKS model. The overall platform is a straightforward stock made from polymer resin.

The buttstock does not collapse, but it does adjust to accommodate different lengths of pull. It is a bit stiff to move around at first, but I just found the length that suited me best and left it there.

The one thing I found is that the adjustable cheek rest does not help much if you have a long length of pull. Rather than rise up and down on a level system it pivots so the front of the rest is higher than the back. The pistol grip provides that

bit of extra control and has a storage compartment in it.

The overall level of difficulty to install your SKS in the Archangel stock is very low. Mine went in straightforward, pretty much a drop-in process. You will need some tools for changing the gas tube. You have to replace the hand guard ferrule pin that retains the hand guard ferrule with the one Archangel provides.

ATI SKS STRIKE FORCE

When you start dealing in a bunch of small metal parts, use a magnetic dish. Even if you knock the dish over, the parts hold tight. The ATI stock has a number of little screws used to assemble the stock, so you want to keep track of them. It is not difficult but it will take you some time.

The stock itself is made from a Dupont glass-reinforced polymer. It has six positions with a collapsible buttstock. The pistol grip has a comfortable contour to it with a rubber back strap to help absorb recoil. The body of the stock is designed to take attachments, allowing you to really expand the tactical capabilities for this platform.

There are a number of accessories available as well as a number of spots to mount Picatinny rails. The cheek rest is fully adjustable for shooting iron sights or your favorite optics.



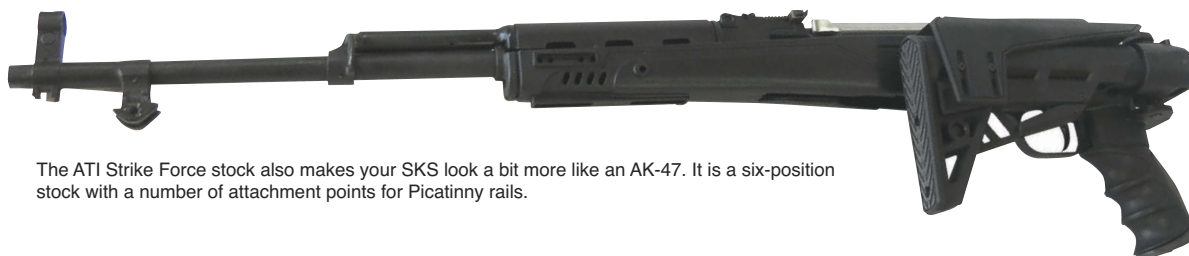
Brass Stacker makes a number of aftermarket products for a variety of firearms. If you just want to keep your SKS original and take it hunting you can get a cheek rest and sling combo from Brass Stacker to dress the rifle up and make it easier to carry around.



The SKS has seen service in a number of different theatres over the years and is a solid battle rifle that often finds a second life in the hands of sport shooting enthusiasts.




The Archangel AASKS stock ends up making your SKS look a bit more like an AK-47 when it is done. The stock is synthetic and can handle all sorts of weather conditions. Because it is lighter than the original wood stock, you do feel the recoil a bit more.



The ATI Strike Force stock also makes your SKS look a bit more like an AK-47. It is a six-position stock with a number of attachment points for Picatinny rails.



The ATI Strike Force stock has a lot of small parts, but don't let that bother you. They include a full set of instructions and videos can be found on-line.



ATI's Strike Force stock has a six-position butt stock and adjustable cheek rest. The stock also folds to make the unit compact.

**“THE SKS...
WITH A FEW
TWEAKS...
CAN BE YOUR
HUNTING RIFLE OR
EVEN SOMETHING
TO RUN
IN THREE-GUN
COMPETITIONS.”**

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

OPTIC MOUNTS

One of the largest struggles with some of the surplus firearms is mounting modern optics to them. Most were designed before it was commonplace to outfit each soldier with anything more than iron sights. With bolt action rifles, it is easy enough to have a gunsmith drill and tap for mounts. With the early self-loading rifles it can be a challenge.

Two systems I looked at for the SKS were the Brass Stacker See Thru Scout Scope Mount and the Sterling Cross Defense Systems Wartak SKS Scope Rail. Someone has to start coming up with shorter names.

BRASS STACKER

Brass Stacker is a bit of a unique company. They have a number of products for retro-fitting various firearms, so they are well worth checking out at www.brasstacker.com. The See Thru Scout Mount is

easy to install, but it does have a number of parts, so keep the dish tip in mind.

Brass Stacker provides a set of directions as well as having a video online to help you with installation. One thing to note is that the system is set up to mount on the original surplus stock.

If you want to use it on any aftermarket stocks, the stocks will have to be modified. Brass Stacker's system mounts to the rear sight system and uses the recoil assembly. The fit varies for each model, so be sure to order the correct one for your rifle.

I have used both the Bushnell Red Dot sight and the Nikon long eye relief scope on my scout mount and both performed well. To use a scope on your rifle with the Brass Stacker, you have to install the Brass Stacker shell deflector. With the Brass Stacker mount you can easily clean your firearm and maintain zero.



This is the Brass Stacker See Thru Scout Scope mount as you receive it. It comes assembled so you can see how it goes together. Even though they provide directions, I would take a picture of it as a reference.



The Sterling Cross Defense System's Wartak SKS Scope Rail is simple to install and no machining is needed. Just disassemble the rear sight and the front shoe of the rail goes in the sight box and is pinned in. The rear of the rail is pinned into place with a screw system that replaces the take down lever.

STERLING CROSS DEFENSE SYSTEMS

The Sterling Cross Defense System's Wartak SKS Scope Rail is a full rail system that attaches to the rifle using a replacement pin at the back of the dust cover. It is also attached to the rear iron sight mount.

A rail system this long allows you to choose between a regular scope, a scout scope or a Red Dot system. I picked out the Nikon Force XR 2.5-8 x 28 scope and the Weaver 40/44 3-9 x 40 as two good scopes for this system.

As you field strip the SKS to clean it, the dust cover comes off and the rail pivots upward. Because the rail is mounted to the rear iron sight, it provides a good enough landmark to reposition your scope. A drawback of this system is that you can no longer use stripper clips because the rail covers the stripper boss. There are aftermarket magazine systems available however.

Installation requires a bit of work, as you have to replace the dust cover take down pin to mount the rail.

SKS AMMO OPTIONS

Loads of inexpensive surplus ammo are available for the SKS, as the 7.62 x 39 round is the most widely used around the world. There is no shortage of this ammo in sight.

Nowadays, there is plenty of hunting ammo being produced in this caliber, not to mention FMJ ammo that is a bit more expensive than surplus but doesn't have corrosive primers. Therefore, you do not have to get all worried about cleaning your firearm as soon as you are off the range.

One such line of ammo I ran through my SKS is the Red Army ammunition imported by Century Arms. It was dependable, accurate and certainly cleaner than surplus.



Here I have installed the bottom Picatinny rail on the ATI stock so I can install a bipod.



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Part of the ATI First Strike recoil system is the rubberized back strap on the contoured pistol grip.

INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

From left to right is the Bushnell Red Dot First Strike, the Weaver 40/44 Series 3-9 X 40 power scope and the Nikon Force XR 2.8-8 x 28.



STILL A BARGAIN

The SKS is still a viable platform and, with a few tweaks, it can be your hunting rifle or even something to run in three-gun competitions. Early on you could pick them up for as low as \$100, but recently the prices have risen. I have seen them as high as \$500, depending on who is selling and buying.



I ran a variety of plinking and hunting loads through my SKS. All of it fed and grouped well. Left to right is some surplus ammo (white box); Red Army; Herter's; and Hornady's 123 grain SST.

Despite the higher prices, you can offset the price of purchase with loads of cheap ammo. More often, you will find them for around \$350, and to me that is a good price for a dependable firearm that's accurate and shoots inexpensive ammo. **IMS**

Abe Elias is an outdoor writer and a custom knife maker (Diving Sparrow Knife Works) and has contract knife designs with several major companies.

BUYER'S CHECKLIST

SELECTING THE RIGHT SKS

Buying an SKS can be a bit tricky. You may get lucky and find a person with one that was never fired or you might not. Here's what to do.

Thoroughly inspect the rifle before you buy it. Because some ammo for this rifle is corrosive, you need to check the barrel, bolt face and gas tube if possible.

When you finally select a rifle, you want to eliminate any trace of corrosive ammo. I use two cleaning products; Shooter's Choice Aqua Clean bore cleaner or Simple Green. I will literally flush the bore out with these.


CANADIAN ROSS

THIS LITTLE-KNOWN BOLT ACTION, WHILE NOT SUITABLE FOR THE TRENCHES, WAS POPULAR WITH SNIPERS IN WWI

■ Text and Photos by Tim Stetzer

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



Often it pays for your friends and co-workers to know about your hobbies.

Many know that I'm something of a gun buff and that I have an interest in old and unusual pieces, especially ones of a military nature.

One such co-worker, Scott Holzwarth, had told me about a Canadian Ross rifle that he'd inherited from his uncle. At the time I really didn't know much about the Ross rifles other than that they had gotten a bad reputation in World War I for being too delicate for the muddy conditions of the trenches. It was said they could be dangerous if you reassembled

them incorrectly, which was apparently easy to do in field conditions.

When Scott showed the rifle to me, I was taken by it at first sight. It was a rather elegant piece and obviously well made. It came up to the shoulder smartly and seemed well balanced. The action was stiff but it had just come out of decades' long storage.

When I asked what he wanted for the rifle he told me, "Buy me lunch someday. I'd rather see the rifle go somewhere where it will be appreciated."

And appreciate it I did. I took the rifle home that night and immediately began to research it.

mk II



ROSS MK II SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: .303 British
Action: Straight-pull bolt action
Overall length: 51.97 inches
Barrel length: 28 inches
Weight: 8.59 pounds
Magazine capacity: 5 rounds
Year of introduction: 1905



The United States used a number of substitute standard rifles for stateside training during World War I including (from top to bottom) the Springfield M1898 Krag rifle, the Canadian Ross Mk II, and the American produced M1891 Mosin-Nagant rifles made by Remington and Westinghouse.

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



The Harris controlled feed platform magazine features an external lever that can be depressed to take tension off the magazine spring and assist in loading.



Ross Mk IIs purchased by the United States were stamped with a flaming ordinance bomb along with U.S. and a serial number in the inside wrist of the stock.

THE CANADIAN ROSS MK II

With a little bit of digging I found out a couple of interesting things about my newly acquired Ross.

First, my Ross was a Mk II model, which apparently did not have the much maligned reassembly quirk that the later Mk IIIs did. There was no concern over whether this one was assembled correctly and would be safe to shoot.

Another curious thing was that the rifle came with an American M1917 Kerr sling. I assumed Scott's uncle put this on, but upon closer inspection of the rifle I found a U.S. stamping along with an American flaming ordi-

ROSS POPULAR WITH CIVILIANS

Although the Ross series rifles proved unreliable and unpopular with Canadian infantrymen in World War I, the rifles were actually quite popular with Canadian and British snipers, as well as competition match shooters of the time, due to their inherent accuracy.

The Ross also saw renewed life after the war in its civilian guise as a hunting rifle. The issues that plagued it as a military rifle weren't really an issue and hunting rifles produced on the Ross action proved popular due to their accuracy and smooth action as well as the introduction of the .280 Ross cartridge, which was essentially the 7mm Magnum of the day. It launched a 140-grain bullet at nearly 3,000 feet per

nance bomb acceptance stamp.

Although I have a general interest in all older military arms, I have a particular soft spot for U.S. martial arms. I grew up shooting the Krag, Springfield and P17 rifles my father collected.

The curious mix of U.S. stamps and sling on the Canadian .303 rifle really had me intrigued and caused me to dig deeper into the history of the rifle and its connection to the U.S. military.

The Ross Mk II was developed in Canada during the early years of the 20th century after a diplomatic spat kept the United Kingdom from licensing Canada to produce the Lee Enfield domestically.

Sir Charles Ross, a Scottish inventor who was well connected in Canadian political circles, stepped in to fill this void of a domestically produced military rifle with his newly designed Ross rifle. The rifle was a straight pull design chambered in the Commonwealth .303 British caliber and fed from a five-round box magazine.

The initial Ross rifles were issued to the RCMP for field testing in 1902, which soon revealed a number of deficiencies that resulted in a series of improvements with the Mk II rifles in 1905. A series of further enhancements over the years resulted in the Mk II* through Mk II**** models being produced.

Yet more changes were made in coming years, culminating with the Mk III Ross being produced in 1910. When Canadian forces hit the trenches in World War I, they rapidly found that the tight tolerances of the Ross rifles were not forgiving of the mud and debris common on the battlefield. Weapon malfunctions were prevalent.

This was also the time when the reassembly issues of the Mk III became evident. This combination of issues caused Canadian troops to abandon their Ross rifles at the earliest opportunity and acquire Lee Enfields from fallen British troops.

The one bright note for the Ross was that it was an extremely accurate rifle and found success with

Canadian snipers who presumably took better care of their weapons than the regular infantrymen. Regardless of this minor bright spot in the Ross's military history, the rifles were withdrawn from service in 1915 and replaced with the Lee Enfield No. 1 Mk III.

COMING TO AMERICA

When I started looking into the U.S. connection, I found that one of the few sources of information on the Ross in U.S. service was the book "U.S. Infantry Weapons of the First World War" by Bruce N. Canfield. Thankfully, like all of Canfield's work, the book is extremely well researched and has tidbits that you can't seem to find elsewhere.

When you think of United States service rifles of World War I, the Springfield Model 1903 and M1917 Enfield come to mind. The United States entered World War I woefully unprepared, however, and ended up issuing a hodgepodge of weaponry both on the battlefield in Europe and at home here in the U.S. for training purposes.

One of the lesser known of those issue items was the Canadian Ross Mk II rifle. After the Canadians withdrew the Ross from service, they had an abundance of Mk I and Mk II rifles in storage that they offered to the United States to use as training rifles to free up Springfield M1903s and Model 1917 rifles for frontline service.

The U.S. ended up purchasing 20,000 Mk II Ross rifles for training purposes, where they served alongside older M1898 Krag rifles and M1891 Mosin-Nagant rifles. The Nagants had originally been produced for the Czarist government of Russia, but were leftover stock that was never delivered following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

According to Canfield, the United States paid \$12.50 per Ross Mk II to the Canadian government, and that included a bayonet, scabbard, sling and oil bottle. They also purchased more than 4.5 million rounds of .303 ammunition, spare parts and manuals to go with the rifles.



The Ross features a mid-point sling swivel attached in front of the trigger guard allowing for a variety of sling attachment methods. In U.S. service the front and rear swivels were used in conjunction with the American M1917 Kerr sling.



The straight pull design of the Ross means that the bolt is pulled directly to the rear and does not need to be turned upwards before being retracted. It was thought that straight pull rifles offered a faster rate of fire than contemporary turn bolt designs.



The butt stock tells the story of the Ross in Canadian service. From the stampings it looks like this rifle saw numerous deployments, including a trip abroad with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915.



A magazine cutoff lever was present inside the trigger guard of the Mk II Ross. This allowed the user to load and fire individual rounds directly into the chamber while holding the rifle's five-round magazine in reserve.

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



The Harris pattern magazine held five rounds of .303 British ammunition but did not use stripper clips, so was slower to load than other rifles of its era.



Rounds had to be loaded into the Ross Mk II one at a time. The user depressed the lever along the right side of the stock to take pressure off of the magazine spring while loading.



After nearly a century in storage, the author and his friend Jim (shown) gave the Ross Mk II its voice back by taking it to the range and letting it do what it was designed to do.



Henry J. Holzworth founded the Champion Coal company after returning from World War I. He later traded a load of coal for the Ross Mk II in this article. Oddly enough, the Holzwarth family sometimes used the alternate spelling Holzworth, as seen on the coal company sign.

Half of the rifles went to the State of New York to arm state guard units, while the rest were split up between training camps in Ohio and Massachusetts. When rifles were accepted into U.S. service, they were stamped with the flaming ordinance bomb and the U.S. stamp followed by a serial number on the underside of the pistol grip.

The Ross Mk II was used stateside for training throughout World War I and then declared surplus at the war's conclusion. The rifles were then offered for sale through the NRA for the princely sum of \$5 each. The Ross didn't prove to be popular, however, likely because of the tales of its performance with the Canadian forces during the war and the price was later dropped to \$3.50 each. Remaining stocks of Ross rifles were eventually returned to Canada in 1926.

THE HOLZWARTH ROSS

My particular Ross made it to the Pittsburgh area where it lived with Scott's uncle, Henry J. Holzwarth. He was a World War I veteran who served in an engineering company during the war. Sometime after returning from the war, he founded the Champion Coal Company in the tiny town of Mt. Oliver, Pennsylvania, which is currently encircled by the City of Pittsburgh.

During the Great Depression, Mr. Holzwarth often took various items or services in trade in lieu of cash for a coal delivery. One of those items ended up being the Ross Mk II, which his nephew Scott later inherited.

The rifle was likely a surplus one purchased through the NRA program. It would be interesting to know if Henry Holzwarth might have used a Ross during training—and perhaps that's why he agreed to accept that particular trade for a load of coal back in the 1930s.

THE ROSS ON THE RANGE

I'm not one to put any firearm in the safe and forget about it. To me, some of the allure of antique firearms is that they are an animate, interactive piece of history. They aren't simply something you read about in a book but rather something you can see, touch and experience firsthand. In the case of a firearm, experiencing it means shooting it. That's exactly what I did when I got my Ross.

I gave it a good thorough cleaning and knocked out

nearly a century's worth of dust, grime and old oil. It became apparent that the Ross was a very well-made rifle. My example exhibited some dings from use and storage, but was in overall excellent condition.

Fit and finish were very good and it was obvious that a lot of attention to detail went into the design and execution of the weapon. The bore proved to be shiny with good clean rifling. The straight pull action was actually quite slick and fast once it was cleaned and re-lubed.

Three days later I was at the range with a couple of buddies, and we were ready to make this Ross speak again after probably 90 years or so of sitting idle in a closet.

We took the Ross along with an Enfield No. 1 Mk III, the rifle which eventually replaced the Ross during World War I. Ammunition on this trip consisted of factory reloaded hunting soft points and some surplus .303 British of indeterminate age.

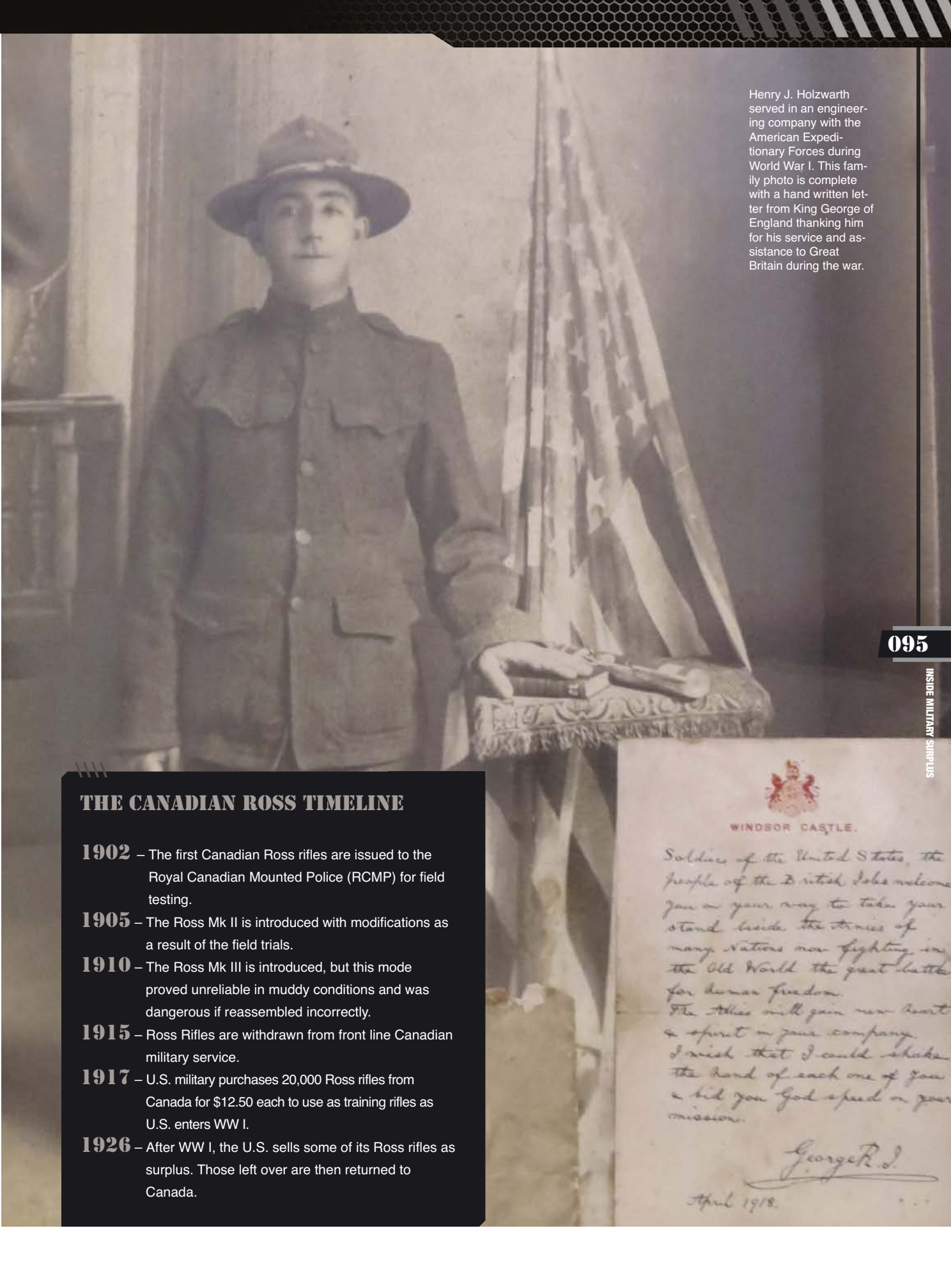
The Ross really does handle well. The '03 Springfield is my gold standard for the way service rifles should handle. I found that the Ross shouldered and pointed extremely well, even with its 28-inch barrel, and was quite on par with the Springfields.

The rifle's straight pull action was easy to work from the shoulder, and it was capable of an impressive rate of fire. We did find that you needed to work the bolt with some authority, as babying it would result in a jam. Extraction was quite vigorous throwing spent brass 10 feet or better to the right of the shooter.

The Ross Mk I and Mk II rifles did not use stripper clips and had to be loaded one round at a time. They use a Harris controlled feed platform magazine that features an odd external lever that you can depress to take tension off the magazine spring and assist in loading. The slower reload was an obvious disadvantage compared to its contemporaries like the Lee Enfield, the Springfield M1903 and the Mauser Gewehr 98. On the range, however, it worked just fine and was something of a novelty.

Handling the Ross side by side with the Enfield was interesting. My No. 1 Mk III is an English BSA model manufactured in 1905, which made it the same vintage as the Ross. This particular rifle has arsenal markings, which indicate it saw use in both World War I and World War II and, while still solid, is not in nearly as nice condition as the Ross.

What's evident shooting the rifles side by side is



Henry J. Holzwarth served in an engineering company with the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I. This family photo is complete with a hand written letter from King George of England thanking him for his service and assistance to Great Britain during the war.

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

THE CANADIAN ROSS TIMELINE

- 1902** – The first Canadian Ross rifles are issued to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for field testing.
- 1905** – The Ross Mk II is introduced with modifications as a result of the field trials.
- 1910** – The Ross Mk III is introduced, but this model proved unreliable in muddy conditions and was dangerous if reassembled incorrectly.
- 1915** – Ross Rifles are withdrawn from front line Canadian military service.
- 1917** – U.S. military purchases 20,000 Ross rifles from Canada for \$12.50 each to use as training rifles as U.S. enters WW I.
- 1926** – After WW I, the U.S. sells some of its Ross rifles as surplus. Those left over are then returned to Canada.



WINDSOR CASTLE.

Soldiers of the United States, the
people of the British Isles welcome
you on your way to take your
stand beside the armies of
many Nations now fighting in
the Old World the great battle
for human freedom.
The Allies will gain new heart
& spirit in your company.
I wish that I could shake
the hand of each one of you
& bid you God speed on your
mission.

George R. I.

April 1918.



A picture of Henry J. Holzwarth's engineering unit, which was deployed to Europe as part of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I.

that Ross is a more elegant rifle. It shoulders faster, the grip provides a more comfortable wrist angle and it seems faster to get on target than the Enfield. While we didn't sit down and bench rest either war horse, we did a good bit of offhand shooting with both rifles. I can see where the Ross would be popular with marksmen and snipers, as it handles like a fine target rifle.

Generally our groups were about half the size of what we got from the Enfield, despite have similar sighting systems. On a follow up trip to the range, I shot five boxes of new manufacture Prvi Partizan ammunition from Serbia. This current manufacture ammunition is loaded with a 174gr FMJ bullet using reloadable brass cases. Feeding was excellent and groups tightened up over the vintage ammunition that we had shot on our first range excursion.

From a pure range perspective, we preferred the Ross to the Enfield. However, when you factor in the Enfield's 10-round capacity, ability to accept stripper clips, and enviable reputation for ruggedness, it be-

comes clear that the Enfield No. 1 Mk III is the superior battle rifle of the two.

ROSS WRAP-UP

After running a few hundred rounds through the Ross and researching its history, I have to say that the Ross Mk II is an intriguing rifle in its own right and a joy to shoot on the range. While not a particularly successful military rifle, it has an interesting history to it, particularly where it intersects with U.S. use during World War I. While inferior to other contemporary designs, it still fulfilled an important role by freeing up Springfield and Enfield rifles for front line combat. **IMS**

Tim Stetzer works for a major East Coast-based law enforcement agency and is an outdoor writer and lifelong shooter.

THE ROSS IN RUSSIA

Despite a rocky military service, nearly 420,000 Ross rifles were manufactured between 1903 and 1915 and the Ross actually saw somewhat widespread use during both World War I and World War II.

In addition to its use by Canadian forces and the U.S. Army for training purposes, large numbers of Ross rifles also went to Great Britain during both wars and to Russia during WWI and then the Soviet Union during WW II under the Lend Lease program.

The Soviets converted some of their Ross rifle to use the Russian 7.62x54mm round during WW II to ease ammunition logistics on the Eastern Front. They continued to use those rifles for competition after the war. They were even used for a short period by the Grand Ducal Guard of Luxembourg during 1945.

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THE “RED NINE”

098

PLUS

MAUSER'S C96 BROOM HANDLE PISTOL IN 9MM GOES TO WAR

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY LeRoy Thompson

I took the long road to acquiring my first “Broom Handle” Mauser. Like many of us who grew up with fathers and uncles who were World War II vets and who watched “Combat” and other shows about WWII, I was fascinated by the Luger pistol.

From an early age I knew I wanted one. Fortunately, too, they were relatively plentiful in those days, having been brought back as war souvenirs in thousands of duffle bags. I acquired a few, as well as some of the other World War II German pistols, including Walther PP and PPK, Sauer 38H

and Mauser Hsc.

Two other fairly common war trophies at the time were Mauser M1896 “Broom Handle” pistols and Japanese Nambu pistols. Nambu ammunition was virtually impossible to find so the pistols were cheap, but I liked to shoot my guns so I didn’t buy one.

I found the M1896 Mausers very intriguing and always wanted one, but there were two problems. At that time, 7.63x25 ammunition was available but hard to find and expensive. Also, I liked the shoulder stock holster for the C1896, but due to BATF regulations at the time, owning one of the Mausers

with an attachable shoulder stock made it a short-barreled rifle. Fortunately, for collectors that regulation has since changed.

A 9MM “BROOM”

When I began to read about the Mauser 1896, I discovered that during World War I, “Broom Handle” pistols had been produced in 9mm Parabellum caliber. That sounded like a “Broom” that I would like to own. Although many German officers had used the M1896 since its introduction (as did a large number of British officers including Winston Churchill), it



SPECIFICATIONS

C1896 MAUSER 9MM PARABELLEUM

Action: Short-Recoil, Locked Breech, Semi-Auto

Caliber: 9mm Parabellum

Overall Length: 11.5 inches

Barrel Length: 5.5 inches

Weight: 2.5 pounds empty

Magazine Capacity: 10 round internal magazine fed by stripper clips



Sights: Rear: Tangent Adjustable 50 to 500 meters; front: Post

099

INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



A view of the grip and rear receiver of the 9mm C96. Note the slot in the back strap to take the shoulder stock, the red nine in the grip, safety in the off position so that the hammer could be cocked and the pistol fired.



The 9mm C96 with its stock affixed, turning it into a quite usable carbine.

100

INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

“...THE SHOULDER STOCK IS A REAL ADVANTAGE IN SHOOTING THIS PISTOL.”



The Red Nine as it would be carried, usually by a shoulder strap attached to the harness.



View of the carrying harness showing the pouch for the takedown tool.

had not been officially adopted by the German Army.

However, in 1916, due to the need to supplement production of Luger pistols, Mauser was given an order for 150,000 C1896 pistols in 9mm Parabellum chambering. Estimates are that about 137,000 to 141,000 were actually delivered before the end of the War.

The C96/16, as this pistol is sometimes known—“16” indicating the year of adoption — often is marked with the Prussian Eagle on the magazine housing. Producing a 9mm version would not have proven too difficult, as Mauser had made an export version of the pistol in 1912 chambered for a 9x25mm Mauser proprietary cartridge. Note that this cartridge is longer than the 9mm Parabellum round and is not interchangeable.

The 9mm Parabellum C1896 pistols appeared very similar to the 7.63 versions, though the sights

were graduated 50 to 500 meters rather than 50 to 1,000 meters as on the flat-shooting 7.63 versions. Finish is not up to the normal Mauser standard as on its commercial C96 pistols.

However, some collectors reported that the final 10,000 of the 9mm Parabellum C96 pistols had a much better finish, closer to those of commercial pistols.

THE “RED NINE”

Initially, the grips of the 9mm pistols were the same as those on the 7.63 pistols, but the presence of a large number of privately owned 7.63 pistols caused problems with ammunition getting mixed. As a result, late in 1917, the 9mm C96 pistols had a large “9” stamped into the grip and filled with red paint, hence the common name for the pistol: “Red Nine” among U.S. collectors.

However, it should be noted

that early deliveries of the 9mm version did not have the Red Nine in the grips, though it may have been added by unit armorers. Also, some of the guns stamped or branded in the field used black to fill the marking.

The contract for the 9mm C1896 pistols stipulated that each pistol should come with a wooden holster stock, a leather carrying harness, a takedown tool and a spare magazine follower spring.

Since it had made its debut in 1896, the Mauser pistol was the first self-loader to achieve substantial success. It was reliable and its high-speed cartridge offered range and penetration. However, its 86-grain bullet did not offer exceptional stopping power. Still, in its time it was considered a serious combat pistol.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As I had first shot a Mauser

C1896 in the days when the stocks were prohibited, I found it a rather large, ungainly pistol. Once the shoulder stock was legal, however, I found that with stock mounted the C96 made a handle little carbine that I shot rather well.

I was collecting various pistols that had been marked by British retailers and had one that had been sold by Westley Richards. It shot very well.

As with many early automatic pistols, it has its idiosyncratic features. By 1915, the C1896 was equipped with a newer, more reliable safety, but it still was a bit complex. With the pistol fully loaded and a round chambered, the safety lever could be thrust forward, moving the hammer back so that it did not rest on the firing pin.

When ready to fire the pistol, the safety could be thrust forward and the hammer cocked. The use of stripper clips allowed relatively fast loading. However, if clips were not available, loading was very slow, requiring the bolt to be held back while rounds were inserted individually.

Note that as I write this, Numrich Arms has C96 stripper clips that will work with .30 or 9mm ammunition. It was easy to remove loaded rounds from the magazine, though, by depressing a button on the magazine base plate and pulling out the spring and follower to allow the cartridges to drop free.

DISASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Early automatic pistols tend to have complicated disassembly



“THE RED NINE MAUSER WAS A PRIZED TROPHY AMONG AMERICAN TROOPS, THOUGH MOST PREFERRED THE LUGER.”



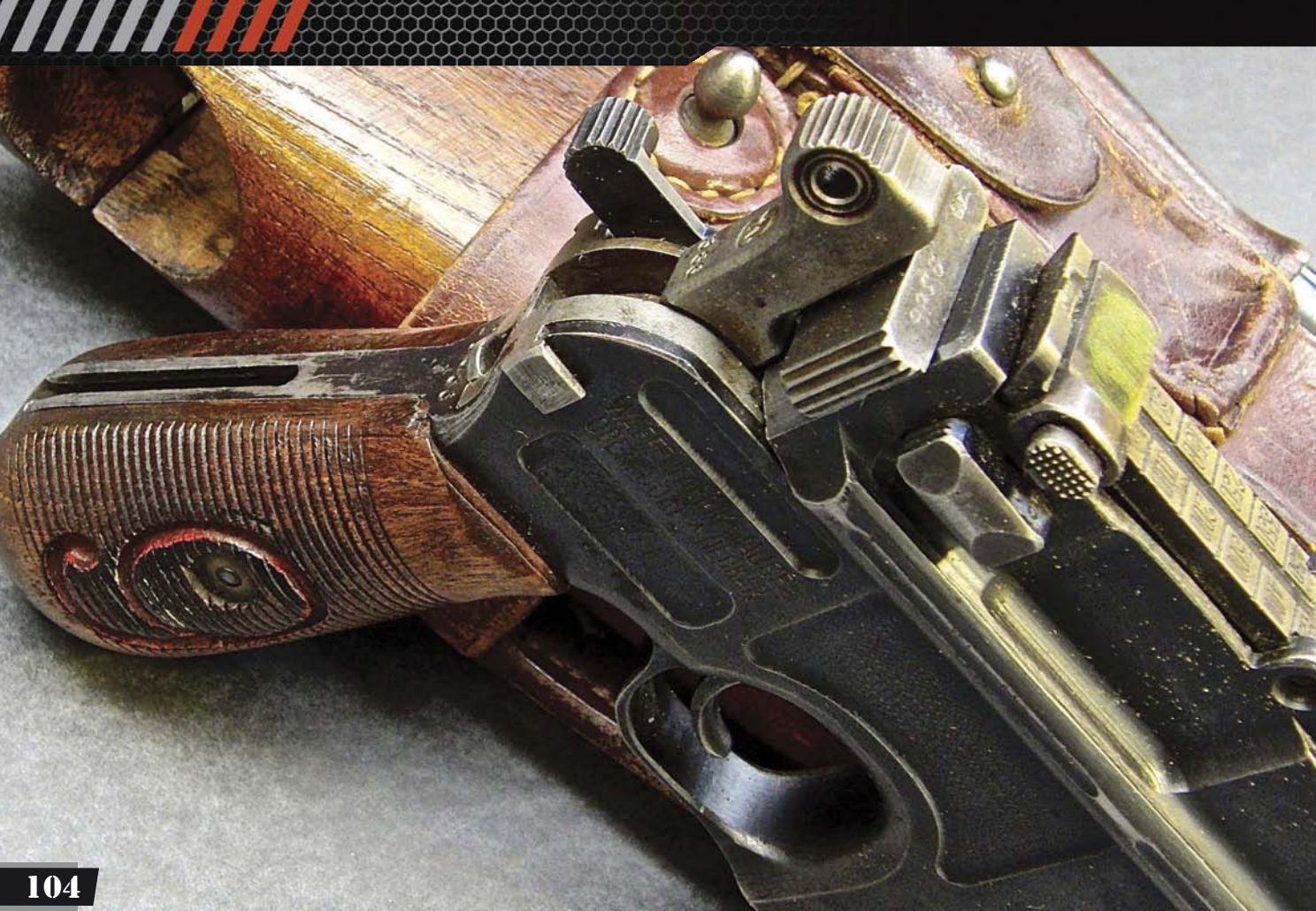
The Red 9 lying atop its wooden stock/holster and carrying harness.

THE WRONG MIX

DON'T SHOOT TOKAREV AMMO IN YOUR MAUSER

The 7.62 Tokarev cartridge, which is readily available right now, will chamber in a Mauser C96 7.63 pistol. That's because the Tokarev round was based on the Mauser round, as C96 Mausers were very popular in Russia. In fact, the "Bolo" Mauser, which has a shorter 3.9-inch barrel, reportedly takes its name from "Bolshevik."

However, the Tokarev cartridge is a hotter load and might damage your .30 Mauser pistol.



procedures, and the C1896 is no exception. The major problem is that there are many small parts that when removed can get lost. This is a particular problem for a military pistol.

Additionally, the pistol is slow to disassemble and even slower to reassemble. That takedown tool supplied with the M1896 9mm order is necessary for removing the firing pin. If your Mauser pistol became clogged with the mud of the trenches, it would be good if an American, French or British trench raid did not occur while it was disassembled.

On the other hand, if the Mauser were assembled and ready to go, it did hold two more rounds than the P08 Luger.

The Red Nine Mauser was a prized trophy among American

troops, though most preferred the Luger. Still, quite a few made it to our shores. Among those that were not captured, many were issued to German police after the War. Others remained in use during World War II and were captured and brought back by G.I.'s.

“BROOM HANDLE” PERFORMANCE

I did not actually shoot the “Red Nine” for this article. However, I have shot at least three examples in the past, as well as a half dozen or more .30 caliber “Broom Handles.”

As I mentioned above, the shoulder stock is a real advantage in shooting this pistol. Generally, I have found versions of the C96 relatively accurate. I have shot at least one 9mm version and a couple of

.30 caliber versions at 100 and/or 200 yards. As I remember, the elevation was usually close using the tangent sight, though I considered anything past 200 meters extremely optimistic.

However, windage was usually off. The .30 Mauser round is very flat shooting and made shooting at 100 yards, and even 200 yards, easier than with the 9mm version.

DESIRED AMONG COLLECTORS

Along with Luger and U.S. 1911 pistols, I consider the C96 Mauser in all its variations one of the most interesting early automatic pistols. It has many of the characteristics that make it a desirable collectible. It is interesting mechanically and interesting in



DID YOU KNOW?

The 9mm C96 pistols had a 9 stamped into the grip and filled with red paint. For U.S. collectors, "Red Nine" became the common name for the pistol.

appearance. It was used by various armies and many well-known individuals.

There are numerous variations, which makes the chase challenging. There is also an array of interesting markings, from British retailers to Chinese police agencies.

I like all of the variants of the "Broom Handle," but the "Red Nine" is still one of my favorites. Part of that stems from my early collecting days when I wanted a

"Red Nine" so I could shoot it more readily.

Ironically, by the time I got one, I had many more pistols in 9mm caliber to shoot. Still, I like the big pistol with the Red Nine in its grips. I spent a few minutes last evening as I took a break from working on this article to ponder if I had been a U.S. Doughboy in World War I whether given the chance I would have brought back a Luger P08 or a Mauser C96 Red Nine as a souvenir.

For me, the answer was easy. I would have made room in knapsack for both. **IMS**

Leroy Thompson is a longtime gun writer and an expert in VIP protection, hostage rescue and counterinsurgency.



THE TOKAREV PISTOL AND ITS SIZZLING 7.62 CARTRIDGE MAKE A GREAT COMBINATION

PENETRATING POWER

■ Text and Photos by Jerry Catania

Fedor Tokarev is not exactly a household name, even among gun enthusiasts. Neither is the pistol he invented, the Tokapeea Pistolet Tokareva obrazca 1930 goda, better known as the Tokarev TT-30.

Designed to replace the Nagant M1895 revolver, the TT-30 rapidly evolved into the improved TT-33 and became one of the best—and most copied—military pistols in history. Adopted by the Soviet Red Army, the Tokarev was produced by the hundreds of thousands throughout World War II and into

the 1950s. The caliber is the sizzling 7.62x25mm Tokarev.

Though discontinued in the USSR in 1952, the basic design (and its variants) has been produced by Poland, Romania, Egypt, Hungary and Yugoslavia, and is still being made by China, North Korea and Pakistan.

In World War II, the Wehrmacht captured Tokarev pistols and used their 7.63x25 Mauser ammunition in them, which has identical external dimensions (despite the nomenclature) but is not as powerful. The 7.63 Mauser can be fired in the extremely strong Tokarev, but the opposite is not true: The

much higher-pressure 7.62 Tokarev round cannot be fired in the Mauser Broomhandle.

THE TOKAREV DESIGN

Fedor Tokarev borrowed heavily from John M. Browning in engineering the TT-30 and TT-33. The Tokarev is a locked breech design that looks like the Browning-designed FN 1903 (which was a blowback design) but utilized the single-link toggle lock-up from the Colt 1911 (also a Browning design). The TT-33 was not a 1911 clone, however, sporting several engineering improvements over the basic 1911 design.



Author firing the Century M57.



The M57 taken down. Note removable trigger sub-assembly and two-piece steel guide rod.

The Tokarev fits nicely in this Galco cdp holster made for the 1911 commander.



THE 7.62X25MM TOKAREV CARTRIDGE

One of the biggest reasons for the effectiveness of the TT-33 Tokarev pistol (and its offspring) as a military weapon is the Tokarev cartridge itself. Check out these ballistics:

CHRONOGRAPH RESULTS

LOAD	MUZZLE	VELOCITY	MUZZLE ENERGY
WINCHESTER (METRIC)	85 GR. FMJ	1,533 FPS	443 FT. LBS.
RED ARMY STEEL CASE	86 GR. FMJ	1,367 FPS	360 FT. LBS.
1950 POLISH MIL-SURP	85 GR. FMJ	1,479 FPS	418 FT. LBS.

Muzzle Velocities (MV) were measured in feet per second (FPS) using an Oehler 35P professional chronograph with the start screen set 6 feet from the muzzle of the Tokarev Pistol. MVs were recorded at an altitude of 1,200 feet above sea level with an ambient temperature of about 82 degrees F.

For one thing, the locking lugs on the re-engineered TT-33 completely encircle the barrel for ease of manufacture. For another, the hammer/sear assembly is simpler, has cartridge guides built in to facilitate reliable feeding, and the entire sub-assembly can be removed for cleaning or replacement in minutes.

The receiver also has magazine feed lips machined into it to maintain reliability in the event a magazine's lips became damaged, dented or distorted. With the Soviet's seeming emphasis on not having anything they deemed unnecessary, the TT-33 does not have a guide rod or manual safety, but did have a lanyard loop on both pistol and—

for whatever reason—the magazine. Even the grips come off easily and there are no screws to work loose anywhere.

The Tokarev may look clunky, but it is actually well balanced and is a natural pointer. The Tokarev has both front and rear sights dovetailed into the slide. Although small by today's standards, they still provide an excellent sight picture, at least in good lighting.

The basic TT-33 has a 4.6-inch barrel, an eight-round magazine, an external extractor, and weighs about 30 ounces. It is extremely thin with no sharp edges. It has an external hammer with a half-cock notch (presumably to act as a safety

of sorts) and the hammer is mostly contained within the slide.

TAKEDOWN IS EASY

Field stripping the Tokarev TT-33 is simpler and faster than the 1911. You don't have to line up the slide with any notches to take down (or re-assemble) the Tokarev. You simply pull back the hairpin-like "coupling retainer" on the right side (it is captured on the receiver so you can't lose it, except with a little clumsiness) and pull out the slide stop lever (technically called the "coupling") on the left.

The slide is then separated from the receiver like most other semi-auto pistols. To remove the



Century's M57 is 100 percent reliable and highly accurate.

barrel, you must turn the barrel bushing 180 degrees (upward) and remove it. The barrel is then taken out in the same manner as a Colt 1911, as is the recoil spring assembly. With a little practice, the process is very fast and could easily be done in the dark of night.

You are not likely to find a real Russian TT-33 on the surplus market today due to several factors. I still see ads online for Polish, Yugoslavian and Romanian models. Some are advertised to be in quite good condition and at very reasonable prices. I also see the Chinese version (Norinco) at pawn shops in both 7.62x25 as well as 9x19mm Luger (Parabellum).

YUGOSLAVIAN M57

I picked up a Yugoslavian version, called the M57, for under \$200 in very good condition. The M57 can be considered an improved TT-33 for the following reasons: It has a slightly longer grip that houses a nine-round magazine, it has a full-length two-piece guide rod to facilitate smooth feeding, and it has a magazine disconnect safety that I find useful, unlike most people.

Like all surplus pistol imports these days, an after-the-fact manual safety was installed on the receiver, as required by law. I personally won't trust it, but it's there anyway. If you possess a Tokarev without such a safety, it is a collector's item, not a shooter.

My Yugo M57 functioned and

fired with near 100 percent reliability and was extremely accurate—that is, after I cleaned a full jar of Cosmoline from its innards and oiled it up properly.

The tremendous blast that I heard about was missing, but the flat, whip-like crack of the round being fired was a little different. Recoil was not even something to consider. I stated that it was almost 100 percent reliable. The Yugo M57 came with one magazine that was pretty beat up with a weak spring that was definitely on its last legs.

Happily, when Century International Arms started importing a commercial version of the M57 (now made in Serbia, as Yugoslavia is just a memory), I obtained a new magazine and the

50-year-old TOK (as I lovingly call it) fed, fired and functioned with 100 percent reliability as if brand new.

THE TOKAREV CARTRIDGE

The basic 7.62x25 Tokarev cartridge fires an 85- or 86-grain Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) bullet at 1,300-1,700 feet per second. In addition to the TT-33 pistol, it was used in Soviet PPSH-41 sub-machine guns and others as well.

Armor-piercing, incendiary and tracer rounds were made during the War. Power levels vary by country with (supposedly) the Czech version being the hottest. I have never seen any of these loads on the market.

Accurate Smokeless Powders, in their Number Two revised edition, showed loads that went over 1,700 FPS. They have since backed off on the pressure levels a bit, but the TOK cartridge still offer serious sizzle for the hand-loader.

Nevertheless, in its standard military and commercial loadings, the 7.62 Tokarev cartridge is capable of serious penetration. It can easily defeat NIJ

Threat Level I, II and IIA Ballistic Vests that will stop all versions of the 9mm round, including NATO-spec FMJ rounds, all 9mm +P and +P+ loads, .45 ACP loads and even .357 Magnum loads.

Of course, that can work against you for personal defense unless you have to shoot through windshield glass or car bodies, neither of which should be much of a deterrent to the hot Tokarev round.

A good hollow point round would be nice to have, though. Wolf makes a jacketed hollow point load, but it limps along at a pedestrian 1,300 feet per second or so, making the TOK round just a little hotter than a +P 9mm. An 85-grain Speer Gold Dot or Federal Hydra-Shok at 1,500 feet per second would be a devastating personal defense round, in my opinion.

Surplus ammo is getting harder to find. Five years ago, you could buy a case of 7.62x25 ammo (1,260 rounds) for under \$100. No more. Commercial ammo is made by Winchester, Sellior and Bellot, Wolf and maybe a few more.

Century currently imports their Red Army Tokarev loads from Ukraine, loaded in steel cases with an 86-grain FMJ bullet at a little under 1,400 feet per second muzzle velocity. It's great for practice and 100 percent reliable in both my Tokarev pistols.

The 7.62 round is flat-shooting and accurate with lots of energy, and that results in flying bowling pins at 50 yards. Water jugs at 100 yards are not safe and the explosive effects that are missing with most FMJ bullets are there with the TOK rounds. I believe the short 7.62 bullet yaws (all FMJ bullets yaw in water-filled media) much earlier than, say, a 9mm bullet, causing its higher energy to be more fully and quickly transferred.

CENTURY ARMS M57

If you want to fully experience the Tokarev pistol and its ammo, Century Arms offers the best option with their new Commercial M57. Made in Serbia to Yugoslavian military Specs, the M57 offers a couple of improvements over a military surplus Tokarev pistol.

Besides having all brand new

A line-up of 7.62x25 ammunition: (l-r) Century's Red Army brand steel-cased; 1950s Polish mil-surp; Winchester's white box metric.



parts (and barrels), the M57 has a real factory-installed manual safety, located on the left side of the slide. The safety is not a hammer-dropping device. It allows cocked-and-locked carry, and the safety can be engaged whether the hammer is cocked or not.

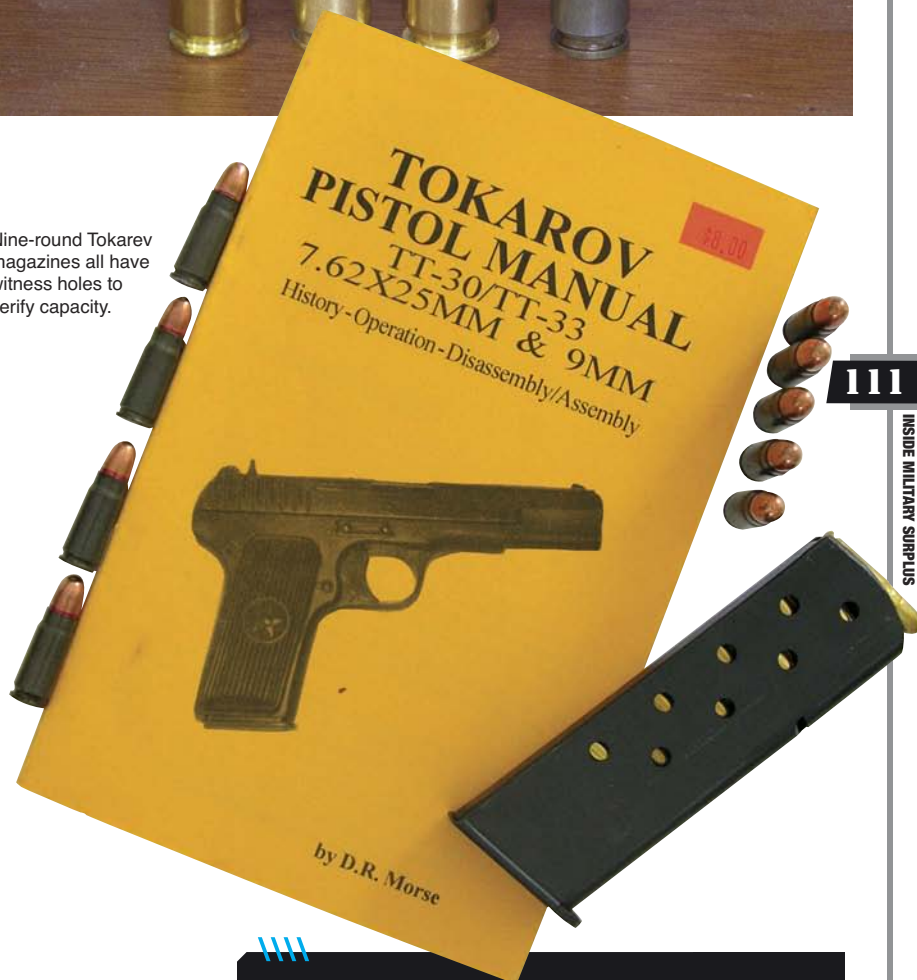
The new M57 differs from the old M57 by no longer having the half-cock notch. It does retain the magazine safety. The M57 shoots to point of aim and despite a trigger that's a little stiff at first (but breaks in nicely), enables good shooting, while ejecting empty cases 15 feet to the right rear. The pistol operates smoothly, locks open after the last shot and functions with life-saving efficiency. I highly recommend it. **IMS**

Jerry Catania is a long-time gun writer interested in all types of firearms. He has been shooting for 50 years.

For comparison: a 9mm luger and .45 ACP flanked by two 7.62x25 cartridges.



Nine-round Tokarev magazines all have witness holes to verify capacity.



“THE 7.62 TOKAREV CARTRIDGE IS CAPABLE OF SERIOUS PENETRATION.”

SPECS FOR CENTURY M57

Importer: Century International Arms
Country of Origin: Serbia
Mechanism: Semi-automatic, single action trigger
Finish: Deep blue
Caliber: 7.62x25 Tokarev (also made in 9mm as the M70a)
Barrel Length: 4.6 inches
Material: Forged steel
Weight: (unloaded) 27 ounces
Capacity: 9+1 rounds

SOUGHT BY COLLECTORS, POLAND'S RADOM VIS 35 9MM PISTOL WAS A ROBUST, INNOVATIVE DESIGN



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PRIZE FIGHTER

INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

■ Text and Photos by Bob Campbell

Following World War I and a subsequent conflict with the Ukraine and Russia, Polish leaders realized that they could no longer rely upon foreign arms to equip their armed forces.

An arms factory was established at Radom in 1925 to manufacture bolt-action military rifles. By 1930, the military decided that a standardized service pistol was necessary, too. The handgun that was developed was one of the finest designs of the coming war.

DESIGN FEATURES

The Radom Vis 35 was a single-action pistol in 9mm Luger with an eight-round, single-column magazine. The designers, Piotr Wilniewicz and Jan Skrzypinski, produced a pistol that relied upon proven Browning principles, but which also offered improvements in some areas.

A unique feature was a decocking lever mounted on the slide, a rarity among single action pistols. The sights were adequate and typical of the time. The pistol locked up with locking lugs located on the barrel in Browning fashion and used an angled camming surface to

unlock at the bottom of the barrel.

The first pistols were marked on the left side of the frame with the arsenal, F B RADOM. The date of manufacture, from 1936-1939, was also marked, along with VIS – wz 35/PAT NR 15567. The Polish Eagle emblem was set between the markings.

The pistol featured plastic stocks with the initials VIS on the right panel and FB on the right grip panel. The Radom was a remarkably clean and robust design that replaced the rather pedestrian Nagant 1895 revolver.

Vis, as a matter of interest, translates to power or force. Be-

FIELD-STRIPPING THE RADOM

4 Easy Steps

The Radom features a disassembly latch behind the slide lock to facilitate the field stripping process.

- 1** Begin with the magazine removed and the chamber empty.
- 2** Pull the slide to the rear to engage the take-down latch in a notch in the slide. The slide lock can then be pressed out from the right, with the slide stop removed from the left side.
- 3** Next, release the take-down lever and remove the slide from the frame. The take-down latch removes pressure on the slide lock from the recoil spring.
- 4** When you reassemble the pistol, the recoil spring guide is pulled toward the front of the slide to relieve pressure on the slide lock so that the slide lock may be reinserted.

“AT 10 YARDS IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT TO CENTER A RAPID-FIRE GROUP IN THE X RING.”



All of the controls of the pistol are visible in this illustration. The magazine release, the slide lock, the disassembly catch and the decock lever are ergonomically sound.

RADOM VARIATIONS

The Radom has a number of variations in markings. It may be broken up into two basic categories: pre-war and war-time production.

Before Nazi occupation, the pistols were produced in a relatively high number, with just under 50,000 manufactured. After the Nazi war machine took over production, some 300,000 pistols were made. The Austrian firm of Steyr-Daimler-Puch was the overseer for production.

There are several detail changes that were made to shorten production time and costs. Though all Radom pistols seem to have been reliable, many in the late war years were far more roughly finished than the high grade production from the early Nazi occupation.

The slotted back strap for a shoulder stock was omitted fairly early during production. After the slotted lug was deleted, the disassembly latch at the rear of the frame was also deleted. Late model finish did not include polishing and tool marks were evident in many of these handguns. I have observed grips with a purplish hue and also wooden grips in

late war time examples.

The pistol illustrated is a fairly early example of a Nazi occupation firearm. Though fit and finish rival any pre-war pistol, the Polish eagle is deleted and replaced with the Waffenamts acceptance stamp, WaA77. In later examples, only 77 was stamped. The frame, slide and barrel serialization match. The pistols were numbered in blocks beginning with A, B, C and so forth.

As Germany's position worsened, there was some concern that complete arms might be stolen from this and other factories. So, Steyr made many of the later frames. To the best of my knowledge, in later years Radom primarily sent 'kits' that were assembled at Steyr. Proof-firing was done at Steyr as well.

With the Red Army advancing toward Poland, the Radom plant was moved to Austria. Production continued but a few months under the codes WaA623 and E/623. The Polish factory was captured and turned to the production of Soviet Arms.



The Radom compared to another great service pistol of the period, the FN High Power.



(left) In this view the disassembly latch is in operation.

(above) The pistol features a full length guide rod and good fit and finish.

RANGE TEST

FIRING IMPRESSIONS

The pistol illustrated is in good mechanical condition. After a thorough function check, the Radom was deemed safe to fire. The long bearing surfaces and the barrel hood, as well as the cocking block, were lubricated prior to the range test.

The magazine was loaded with eight rounds of Remington UMC 115-grain FMJ. The first few rounds were cautiously fired below eye level into the berm. The pistol functioned perfectly. The pistol was fired at steel plates at 15 yards and man-sized targets at 7 and 10 yards.

The slight recurve in the grip frame makes for good comfort and control. The pistol feels secure in the hand and the balance is ideal. At 10 yards it was not difficult to center a rapid-fire group in the X ring. An eight-round group, fired as quickly as I could regain the sight picture, spanned perhaps 5 inches.

The range work confirmed that the pistol is combat worthy. I also took the time to fire the pistol for accuracy from a solid bench rest. I chose the 15-yard line in deference to the small military sights of the Radom.

The pistol was fired with two different loads, the Remington UMC 115-grain FMJ and the Remington 115-grain jacketed hollow point. The JHP bullet fed, chambered and fired perfectly. Each load averaged about 2 to 2½ inches in dispersion. The Radom will shoot well in trained hands.

A caution: Some of these pistols have been fired with corrosive ammunition, and the bores are rough as a result of infrequent cleaning. On one occasion I applied a considerable amount of cleaning and elbow grease in equal proportions to a shooter grade Radom.

After the bore was finally clean and free of copper deposits, the pistol's groups with the Remington 115-grain FMJ shrank from 8 to 4 inches at 25 yards. Another Radom proved reasonably accurate with jacketed loads but the roughness of the bore caused even hard-cast lead bullets to keyhole beginning at 7 yards.

cause the pistol was introduced at the same time as the Browning High Power, this is a matter of interest. The pistol passed a rigorous test that included firing 6,000 rounds of ammunition.

When examining the Radom Vis 35, there are good features that are obvious to trained shooters. One of these is the grip angle and hand fit. The pistol feels similar to the Colt 1911, and the grip is smaller in circumference than the Browning High Power. The slide rides low above the hand in typical

Browning fashion. This low bore axis results in a good firing angle and limited muzzle flip. There is simply little leverage for the muzzle to rise.

Compared to the 1911, the angled camming surfaces are more modern and require less machine work. Other contemporary pistols relied heavily upon Browning design features. The Tokarev TT 33 and the French MAS 35, retained the original Colt type barrel bushing. The Radom, in common with the Browning High Power, uses a

fixed rather than a separate barrel bushing.

The pistol also features a captive guide rod and spring. The full length guide rod is a desirable feature in modern handguns and a rugged and reliable addition to this 1930s handgun.

Just as the cavalry was a highly influential part of the U.S. Army during the 1911 pistol trials, the Polish cavalry had great influence on the Vis 35 pistol. The grip safety was considered important. If the pistol was dropped, the grip



safety would immediately engage and prevent the pistol from firing and possibly injuring the cavalryman or his horse.

Another concern was that after firing the pistol in combat, the soldier was left with a cocked pistol. Lowering the hammer manually by the use of the thumb while pressing the trigger was something to be avoided.

The Poles added the modern decocking lever. When the decocker is depressed, the firing pin is moved forward and a steel block is moved into place. The sear is tripped and the hammer falls to rest. The decocker does not act as a safety; rather it is spring loaded and returns to position after the hammer falls.

The pistol features an inertial firing pin that does not touch the cartridge when the hammer was in the fully lowered position. When the hammer falls, it strikes the firing pin and drives it forward over spring pressure. The firing pin then returns to its original position after firing. The Radom's knurled hammer allowed the cavalryman to cock the pistol with one hand simply by brushing the handgun against his leg or belt.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Radom was accurate when in new condition, but like all firearms will suffer a deterioration of accuracy when its life has been hard.

The Radom is an interesting part of history. The pistol is well made of good material and built on proven design principles. The Radom generates a lot of collector interest and should continue to do so in the foreseeable future.

IMS

Bob Campbell is an outdoor writer specializing in firearms and self defense.

Note at the bottom of the front strap there is a slight indent that aids in removing the magazine.



This close up image shows typical war time Radom pistol markings.



Attention to detail is evident in this handgun—note the checkered surfaces on each control.



Radom magazines are well designed and well made. They are reliable in most cases with even modern open nose bullet ammunition.



The Radom compared to a 1911 handgun. Each features a grip safety, and each features a well designed grip frame.

“A UNIQUE FEATURE WAS A DECOCKING LEVER, A RARITY AMONG SINGLE-ACTION PISTOLS.”

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



The barrel hoods exhibits excellent fit in this war-time Radom.



THE INLAND M1 CARBINE AND M1911A1 ARE PROVEN DESIGNS THAT ARE EFFECTIVE TODAY

PERFECT COMPANIONS

■ By Jim Dickson / Photos by Inland Manufacturing

The M1 carbine and the M1911A1 are now being made by a familiar name.

During World War II, the Inland Division of General Motors made the most .30-caliber carbines of any manufacturer. Now, the name has been resurrected with the new Inland Manufacturing. While the company has no connection to the one from WW

II fame, it is reproducing two of the most time-honored firearms of that era in the M1 Carbine and the M1991A1 pistol.

ADVANTAGES OF THE CARBINE

The pairing of the M1 Carbine and the M1911A1 proved one of the most effective combinations ever issued by the U.S. Military. I knew men who did their fighting

with the hard-hitting .45 automatic and kept the carbine for long shots.

The M1 carbine has the highest number of enemy soldiers hit per rounds fired of any weapon ever issued by the U.S. It is as light and easy to fire as a .22 and has so little recoil that the sight picture is barely disturbed making aimed rapid-fire shots under the stress of combat. The success of this pairing



JIM DICKSON PHOTO

resulted in these being the standard issue weapons for U.S. Special Forces when the Vietnam War started. Many stuck with them after the M16 debuted. There are still plenty of men who have used both the M16 and the M1 carbine and prefer the carbine for combat. It's lighter, faster on target, hits harder than the M16 and it is a whole lot easier to maintain.

The M1 carbine is so much more reliable than the M16 that there is no comparison. As a matter of fact, the M1 carbine was actually more reliable and accurate than the M1 Garand.

Today, every member of the family can handle and fire it effectively. It is perhaps the fastest and easiest rifle to hit with ever made. Its ammunition is small and lightweight and won't destroy all the meat on a squirrel or rabbit, yet will still bring down a deer.

THE 1911'S PROVEN RECORD

In Pacific jungle fighting and in house-to-house fighting anywhere, it's hard to beat a good pistol. You simply can engage your target faster with a pistol in one hand (but not two hands) than you can any other weapon.

Just as this has proved a winning duo for the combat soldier, it also is a winning combination for the civilian wanting to defend himself and his family against come-what-may. No pistol is more reliable than the M1911A1, yet it is so easy to shoot that anyone can handle it.

Like its illustrious predecessor, the .45 Colt, the .45ACP was designed to stop a charging cavalry horse with one shot for the old axiom is true, "To stop a horseman, stop the horse."

Over the years the M1911A1 has proved itself to be the ultimate fighting pistol over and over. Do you really want to stake your life on anything less than the best?

PERFECT COMBINATION FOR CIVILIANS

Together, the M1 carbine and M1911A1 pistol are the perfect "bug out" arms for when the SHTF. Both of these guns plus their ammo still leave you plenty of room to pack other supplies. You have the carbine to engage targets out to 300 yards and the pistol, which should never leave your side in this scenario. Anything else is



The late-style barrel band with bayonet lug is the most accurate type for the carbine and a key secret to its accuracy.

FAST FACT

The Inland name is not marked in the same place as on the original carbines. Still it is a grand old name that deserves to remain on the carbine so closely associated with it. And now it is also being added to the M1911A1 pistol.

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

“THE CARBINE IS THE BEST AIMED, RAPID-FIRE MILITARY WEAPON THAT HAS EVER BEEN USED.”

just going to be heavier and bulkier with no real gain in effectiveness.

As home defense guns, they are a perfect combination. The M1911A1 is best for inside the house, but if trouble arises outside, the carbine can deal with whatever arises at longer ranges.

In times of disaster, when the police aren't responding today, looters and rioters habitually don't want to keep coming once they start taking casualties. There are plenty of easier, unarmed marks to prey on for them to risk getting killed.

Noise levels when firing guns in confined spaces are rarely considered. They are effectively much

louder here, especially when fired next to a wall and permanent ear damage can occur. The .45 ACP and .30 Carbine rounds are bad enough, but shooting a 12-gauge shotgun or a 5.56 in tight quarters is just asking for ear damage.

THE NEW GUNS FROM INLAND

After picking up the new Inland guns from at Palmer Tactical in Tucker, Georgia, I was pleasantly surprised to see the guns appeared just like those of Army issue. I prefer a straight G.I. issue M1911A1; some of the newer versions are far too strange for my tastes.

For an M1 carbine to look com-

mercial brings back bad memories of a certain long-defunct company's non Mil-Spec carbines that never could be made to function reliably.

Inland Arms has gone to great lengths to meet the Mil-Specs, and the result is the quality of gun that you want to buy. These guns made their reputation in the military and not with tightly fitted commercial variations that can't take the mud, sand and rust of combat.

THE CARBINE UP FIRST

The carbine came with a G.I. sling and oiler, but I did not install them as I was test firing instead of carrying it all day.



HOLSTER THAT 1911

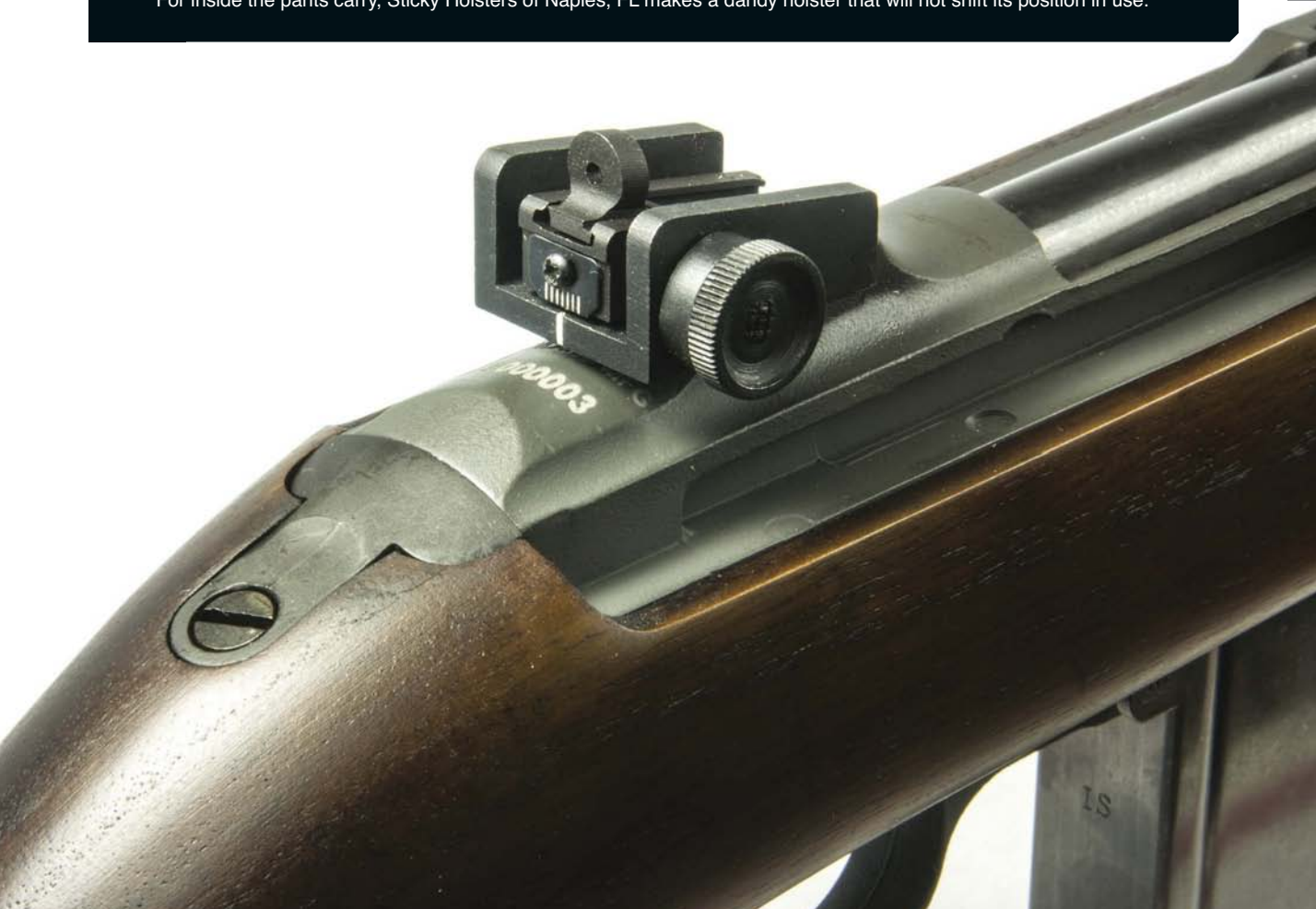
Accessories for the M1911A1 are easy to find.

Pacific Canvas and Leather Co. in Phelan, CA makes Mil-Spec holsters and web gear for it. You can choose between the M1916 holster that the Army used in every war since then or the low slung M1912 version. These are the best combat holsters ever made for this gun.

They also make all of the canvas web gear for the M1911A1 and the M1 carbine so you can get your magazine pouches and slings, etc. here as well. Their products meet the Mil-Spec and are indistinguishable from the originals.

For police and civilian open or concealed carry, you just can't beat a good pancake holster like El Paso Saddlery's "Tortilla" holster. The pancake holster is so comfortable that you can sleep with the gun on and not get awakened when you roll over on it. It is extremely concealable and fast to draw.

For inside the pants carry, Sticky Holsters of Naples, FL makes a dandy holster that will not shift its position in use.





SOURCES

Inland Manufacturing: www.inland-mfg.com

Marvel Precision: www.marvelprecision.com

El Paso Saddlery: www.epsaddlery.com

Sticky Holsters: www.stickyholsters.com

Pacific Canvas and Leather: www.pacificcanvasandleather.com



“...IT’S HARD TO BEAT A GOOD PISTOLEER WITH A M1911A1, THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING PISTOL.”

For test firing the M1 carbine, I had 100 rounds of Hornady 110-grain FTX, 50 rounds of Georgia Arms 110-grain FMJ, 250 rounds of Armscor 110-grain FMJ, 40 rounds of Federal Power Shok 110-grain SP, 20 rounds of Speer Gold Dot 110-grain SP and 100 rounds of Aguila 110-grain FMJ. That’s not much ammo for a gun that is this much fun to fire. The 560 rounds

were gone far too soon.

None of the ammo tested had any trouble meeting Inland’s M1 carbine factory accuracy standard of 2-inch groups at 200 yards. That’s a lot better than your average M1 Garand will do. Firing offhand without a sling the little carbine easily hit anything big enough to see out to 300 yards.

The carbine is the best aimed, rapid-fire military

weapon that has ever been issued. There is little muzzle blast and no recoil so you never lose your sight picture. Just keep that front sight post on the target and keep pulling the trigger. Bullets will soon be flying into your target.

THE M1911A1 UP NEXT

The M1911A1 was test fired with 960 rounds of ammunition,



The fine workmanship on the M1 carbine is evident upon close inspection.

consisting of 160 rounds of Hornady 185-grain XTP, 100 rounds of Winchester Win1911 230-grain FMJ, 40 rounds of Winchester PDX Defender 230-grain Bonded JHP, 200 rounds of Black Hills Ammunition 230-grain FMJ, 100 rounds of Aguila 230-grain FMJ, 50 rounds of Georgia Arms 230-grain Speer Bonded Hollow Point, 100 rounds of Barnes Bullets 185-grain TAC-XPD all copper bullet, 150 rounds of Federal American Eagle 230-grain FMJ and 60

rounds of Federal Premium 230-grain Hydro-Shok JHP.

All of the ammunition functioned flawlessly and easily shot inside the factory standard of 1 ½-inch groups at 25 yards.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Experts have different favorites, but not everyone is an exhibition shooter or big enough to tote a MG42 and its ammo even if it were legal and readily available.

For the man looking to get one rifle and one pistol to defend his

family, the tried and true combination of the M1911A1 and the M1 carbine is the best choice. Now you can get both from one source. **IMS**

Jim Dickson has written for gun magazines in 12 countries for nearly 30 years.

.22 CONVERSION KIT OFFERS INEXPENSIVE PRACTICE

While .45ACP ammo is never cheap, the M1911A1 can be quickly converted into the world's best .22 match pistol by the simple addition of the Marvel Precision LLC .22LR conversion unit.

This is my favorite .22 pistol, and I cannot urge you strongly enough to go and get one. It is quick and easy to install and remove. It simply outperforms all other .22 pistols once it is installed. Having one enables you to practice with the gun you are staking your life and the lives of your family on without breaking the bank.

SUPER SURPLUS

STOCK YOUR KIT OR ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION WITH THIS GREAT GEAR

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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

Are you looking for economical gear for camping or to outfit an emergency kit? Or are you looking for that unusual piece of militaria to add to a collection? Take a quick look at some of the military surplus sources and you'll find everything you need — some things you never expected. **IMS**

1.

Item: *Combat Vehicle Crewman Helmet*

Source: Army Navy Sales

Website: www.armynavysales.com

Description: This is an original U.S. Military combat vehicle crewman helmet as issued during Vietnam. These ballistic nylon helmets are bullet-resistant, but don't test it. These are used in very good condition but might be missing foam ear inserts. Microphone and cable are included but might vary in style.

Price: \$69.99



PHOTO: GARY BRYAN



2.

Item: U.S. Aircraft M24 Chemical Biological Gas Mask Bag

Source: Army Navy Sales

Website: www.armynavysales.com

Description: These 12 inch by 13 inch gas mask bags from the 1990's originally were designed for the ABC-M24 aircraft gas masks. Now they make great carryall bags for the range or the woods. I use one as a tool bag in the trunk of my car. The adjustable strap allows for carry over the shoulder or around the waist. Two pockets inside keep gear organized.

Price: \$9.99



3.

Item: M65 Field Jacket Woodland ERDL Leaf Pattern Camo

Source: Army Navy Sales

Website: www.armynavysales.com

Description: These water-repellant field jackets feature a hood that tucks into the collar, four large pockets, front zipper and snap storm flap, drawstring waist and hem. These jackets are made to military specs in the U.S. Old stock, but new condition. Medium regular size only accommodates height from 67 to 71 inches and chest from 37 to 41 inches.

Price: \$69.99



5.

Item: Field Pack Suspenders M1951

Source: Army Navy Sales

Website: www.armynavysales.com

Description: These Korean War-era canvas suspenders have adjustable straps and padded shoulders. These are used but in good condition.

Price: \$14.99



4.

Item: Wool Shirt

Source: Army Navy Sales

Website: www.armynavysales.com

Description: These are genuine U.S. Military wool shirts that date from the Korean War and were issued into the 1980s. Material is 80 percent wool and 20 percent nylon. Two button flap pockets. Color: O.D. Sizes: XS, S, M, L. Condition: New.

Price: \$19.99



6.

Item: Navy Life Vest/Survival Kit

Source: Army Navy Sales

Website: www.armynavysales.com

Description: This U.S. Navy life vest/survival kit from the 1990s wraps at the waist and includes a Cyalume personal marker light, whistle and sea dye marker packet. The integral life vest has a self-inflator or can be inflated by mouth. These may show signs of use. The kits are expired, so the self-inflator cylinders and marker lights are not guaranteed.

Price: \$39.99



8.

Item: WWII Navy MK IV Gas Mask

Source: Army Navy Sales

Website: www.armynavysales.com

Description: A list of military surplus gear would not be complete without a gas mask. This hard-to-find U.S. Navy adjustable gas mask is new from old stock and comes with a carry bag, anti-fog past and cloth. A collectible not for actual use.

Price: \$124.99



7.

Item: Two-Pack of WWII Shoe Impregnate

Source: Army Navy Sales

Website: www.armynavysales.com

Description: Waterproof those old boots with this two-pack of impregnate shoe waterproofing compound from World War II. Each of the cans is new and unopened from old stock and is sufficient to treat two pairs of shoes.

Price: \$9.99



9.

Item: M9 Bayonet

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: M9 bayonet fits any M16, M4 or AR-15 that's equipped with a milspec mount. It's a 7-inch stainless steel blade with black oxide finish and sawtooth spine, and has a textured, glass-reinforced nylon handle. Includes quick-release scabbard and a built-in wire cutter and screwdriver. It's 12 inches overall.

Price: \$189.95



10.

Item: *British DPM Desert Field Jacket*

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: This British Desert Field Jacket is made of rip-stop poly/cotton features a full-length zipper with hook and loop closures on the sleeve cuffs. There's lots of room for essentials with four large pockets and two zippered chest pockets. Sizes: M, L, XL. Condition: New or like new.

Price: \$24.95



11.

Item: *Russian Puma Camo Backpack*

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: This Russian pack features nylon web shoulder straps and nylon straps with buckle closures on the flap cover. Vinyl bottom is waterproof. Measures 10 inches long by 14 inches wide by 15 inches high. Condition: New with some signs of storage wear.

Price: \$19.95

12.

Item: *Swedish Field Kitchen on Wheels*

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: Feed your troops in the field with his 1960-vintage mobile field kitchen with trailer mount. Includes burners, food warmers, hoses, extra tarps and detachable chimneys, and fold-down metal tables on three sides. Heavy duty vinyl sides extend for use as an awning. Used in very good condition.

Price: \$995.00



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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS



13.

Item: *Swedish Arctic Expedition Sled*

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: This Swedish Military pre-World War I sled is a real collector's item. Designed for hauling supplies through the snow, it's constructed of wood with brass rails and a canvas cover. It measures 68 inches long by 21 inches wide by 5 inches high.

Price: \$249.95





14.

Item: *Czech Round Mess Kit*

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: This three-piece aluminum mess kit includes 5-inch (3 inches deep) and 6-inch (3¼ inches deep) diameter cook pots with fold-out metal loop handles. The lid can be used as a plate. The smaller pot nests inside the larger one, with the handle of the larger one locking the lid. Assembled, the kit measures 4½ inches by 6 inches. Weight: 1.25 pounds.

Price: \$10.95



16.

Item: *Softshell Hunting Jacket and Matching Pants*

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: This new, unissued jacket features two breast pockets and two double snap cargo pockets; two-way nylon zipper with snap-down storm flap and drawstring waist with cord-locks. Sizes: M-2XL. Color: Hunter green. Matching hunting pants are sold separately. They're fully lined, waterproof and breathable with five pockets. Double snap waist and zipper fly.

Price: \$34.95 for jacket; \$19.95 for pants



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INSIDE MILITARY SURPLUS

15.

Item: *British Arctic Sleeping Bag With Gore-Tex Bivy Cover*

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: This British military sleeping bag is filled with down and feathers and features a full-length, baffle-covered zipper. Includes a Gore-Tex bivy cover for protection from the elements. Measures 72 inches by 32 inches wide at the shoulders. Weighs 5.65 pounds. Used in excellent condition.

Price: \$99.95



17.

Item: *Chinese Infantry Helmet*

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: Excellent collectible. All steel shell, canvas and nylon liner, no straps. Used, some with slight rust from storage.

Price: \$9.95



18.

Item: Rustic Flare Gun with Canvas Pouch

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: From Eastern Europe of the 1970s and '80s. Break-open design with composite grips. Fires 26mm flares (not included). Canvas pouch has adjustable web shoulder strap.

Price: \$89.95

19.

Item: Euro Canteen/Cup/Cover Combo

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: New 1-liter black plastic canteen with screw cap is matched to used O.D. cotton cover and used canteen cup. Cover has pistol belt hook and webbed belt loop.

Price: \$11.95



20.

Item: Swedish Winter Hat

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: Made of water repellant cotton duck with drop-down, pile-lined ear flaps and forehead warmer panel. O.D. color. Sizes: 7, 7.25, 7.5, 7.625. New and unissued.

Price: \$8.95

21.

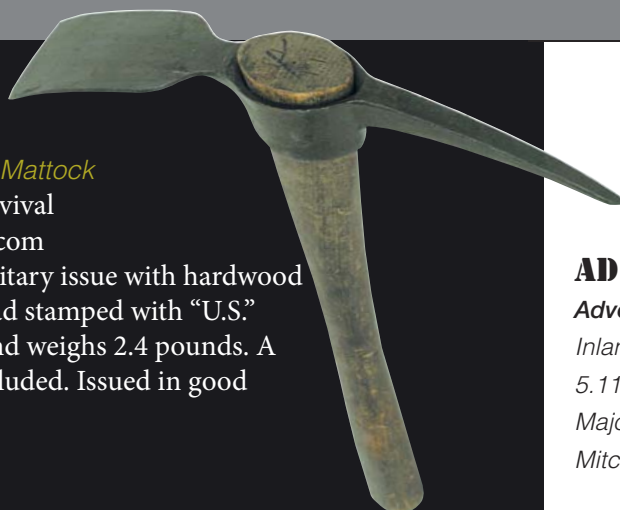
Item: U.S. Military WWII Pic Mattock

Source: Major Surplus & Survival

Website: www.majorsurplus.com

Description: Genuine U.S. Military issue with hardwood handle and forged steel head stamped with "U.S." Measures 17 inches long and weighs 2.4 pounds. A canvas carrying sling is included. Issued in good condition.

Price: \$69.95 **IMS**



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ATTACK ATTACK ATTACK**BUY WAR BONDS**

NOW COLLECTIBLE

CALL TO ACTION

Posters, such as this one from World War II urging the purchase of war bonds, once called a nation to action. Now they're a part of history, often forgotten, and preserved only by collectors.



YOUR MISSION. OUR COMMITMENT.



VoodooTactical.com



Going... Going... Gone!

Because the Conflict with Russia, Ukraine and Obama prevents importing any more WWII Rifles for many years, if ever. These are the Last!

The Last Best Original WWII Mauser 98 Still Available Anywhere Today.

No Collection is complete without the Mauser 98, the classic definition of the modern bolt-action rifle. Everybody wants at least one!

Our Last Mauser 98 Karbines have a beautiful finish and bright, sharp barrels. Made before WWII on a Belgian FN production line in Serbia, re-standardized at the factory in 1947 and designated M24/47. They have remained preserved and unissued, until we issue yours.



M2447 Mauser 98 Karbine \$399
(Other Grades of Mausers from \$299. to \$699.)

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All our Original WWII-era rifles are ideal for Collecting,
Target Shooting, Hunting and Preserving History.

The Last Original WWII Soviet Sniper Rifle

The Most Effective, Most Feared Sniper of WWII.



FREE:

with your rifle you get
"Notes of a Sniper",
Vassili Zaitsev's first-hand
book about dueling snipers
at Stalingrad.

Mosin Collector Sniper Rifle \$799
Special Features and Other Grades also Available

Plus you get the original Soviet sling,
dual ammo pouch, cleaning handle and
rod guide, oil can, and rifleman's tool.



This Mosin M91-30 PU Sniper Rifle
was Manufactured in the Soviet
Union during WWII together with
its Original serialized
matching WWII Scope.

Also **FREE**, you will see this
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